Jo: Dawsing

A TREATISE OF THE *Neceſſity* and *Frequency* of Receiving the *Holy Communion*.

With a *Reſolution* of *Doubts* about it.

In *Three* DISCOURSES begun upon *Whit-Sunday* in the Cathedral Church of *Peterburgh*, 1684.

To preſs the obſervation of the Fourth *Rubrick* after the Communion Office.

By *SYMON PATRICK*, D. D. Dean of *Peterburgh*, and One of His Majeſtie's Chaplains in Ordinary.

The Third Edition.

LONDON,
Printed for *Luke Meredith*, at the *Angel* in *Amen-Corner*,
MDCLXXXVIII.

IVth Rubrick after the Communion.

And in Cathedral and Collegiate Churches and Colledges, where there are many Prieſts and Deacons, they ſhall all receive the Communion with the Prieſt, every Sunday, *at the leaſt, except they have a reaſonable cauſe to the contrary.*

BIBL CANT ACAD

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To the Moſt Reverend

FATHER in GOD,

WILLIAM

By Divine Providence

LORD ARCHBISHOP

OF

CANTERBURY,

HIS GRACE,

Primate of all *ENGLAND*, and Metropolitan, one of His Majeſtie's moſt Honourable PRIVY-COUNCIL, *&c.*

May it pleaſe your Grace,

HAving endeavoured, with ſome ſucceſs, to reſtore the Weekly Communions, in that Church to which I relate, and hoping for greater, by publiſhing theſe Diſcourſes, which I made there upon that occaſion; I take the boldneſs to ſend them abroad, under your *Grace*'s Protection: that if they can do any good, all that ſhall receive it

may underſtand unto whom, under God, they principally owe it, and ſtand obliged to acknowledge it.

For it was by your *Grace*'s Fatherly Care, that I was put in mind of this great Duty, and exhorted to put it in practice: which produced theſe Meditations, wherein I have preſſed it upon others. Who will be ſtirred up, I truſt, by this means, to bleſs God for ſetting over them ſuch a Faithful Paſtor, as, by taking care to have this Sacred Food provided continually for them, ſeeks their *increaſe in true Religion, and their nouriſhment with all goodneſs.*

They are very blind who do not ſee this to be a ſingular bleſſing; and very hard, whoſe hearts are not affected therewith: eſpecially at ſuch a time as this, when Religion calls for all the ſupports we are able to lend it; and teaches us, it deſires no better, no other than it ſelf, if we will but uphold it in our hearts.

Of which I beſeech *the Lord of all power and might, the Giver of all good things,* to make every one of us ſo deeply ſenſible; that we may be no longer negligent in the principal office of it: but, in ſome meaſure, return unto that *Firſt*

love

love towards our bleſſed Lord and Saviour; from which we, as well as other Chriſtian People, have long ſince ſhamefully faln.

And may the ſame Good God, who put this thing into your *Grace*'s heart, be pleaſed to bleſs and proſper all your pious deſignments: and prolong your days, which are ſpent in the ſtudy of the publick good, to ſee the ancient Devotion, and Vertue too, not only bud again in this Church, but flouriſh alſo, and bring forth Fruit in ſuch abundance; that it may be the joy of all its Friends, the terror of all its Enemies; and, as the Prophet ſpeaks of *Jeruſalem*, *a Praiſe in the Earth.*

Then will this that your *Grace* hath done, be ſpoken of with Praiſe; and Poſterity will call you Bleſſed. Nay, to have but deſigned and attempted this, whatſoever the iſſue be, is ſo praiſe-worthy; that it will make your Name no leſs honoured in future Generations, than that great Devotion, which we ſee combines in you with eminent Learning, that deep Humility, which cohabits with the higheſt Dignity, makes your ſelf to be reverenced in this.

With which Reverence, if the Confidence I take, in making this ſmall Preſent to your *Grace*, ſeem inconſiſtent, I comfort my ſelf with the long experience I have had; that the beſt men are not always the hardeſt to pleaſe, but ever the eaſieſt to forgive: As I doubt not your *Grace* will the preſumption of this Addreſs, from,

7th *Sunday* after *Trinity*, 1684.

May it pleaſe your Grace,

Your Grace's

Moſt humble and

Moſt obedient Servant,

Symon Patrick.

To my Beloved Friends the Inhabitants of the City of *Peterburgh.*

THE reaſon of Printing theſe Diſcourſes, is nothing elſe, but the hope I have, that by preſenting to your Eyes, what you heard lately with your Ears; it may make not only a new, but a more laſting impreſſion upon your hearts: becauſe you may have recourſe to it when you pleaſe; and thereby not only refreſh your memories, but ſettle in your minds the remembrance of thoſe things, which you perceive have a power in them, to perſwade you to the conſtant performance of that duty, which is the ſubject of this Book.

A weighty Duty it is, whoſe practice I here moſt earneſtly preſs: and thereby invite you alſo to the enjoyment of a very high Priviledge; the higheſt we are capable of, in this preſent State.

So it was accounted in ancient times; when to be detained from it by ſickneſs, or ſuch like hindrance, was lookt upon as a

very ſore affliction: *under which they groaned ſo heavily, that they were wont to be comforted, by having the Holy Sacrament ſent home to them, from the Church, in token of Peace and Communion. But when any one was deny'd the Communion, being thought unworthy to receive it, they look't upon it as the greateſt* puniſhment *in the World. Such a puniſhment, that they could not reſt quietly under it; but, being full of grief and ſorrow for thoſe ſins which kept them from ſuch a Bleſſing, they made moſt humble ſupplications, with many tears and moſt lamentable cries, to be reſtored to the peace of the Church, and Communion with Chriſt in his benefits. They fell upon their Knees, and beſeeched the forgiveneſs and the Prayers, and Interceſſions of their Chriſtian Brethren: whom they intreated, after a moſt lowly manner, to ſolicite for them, that they might no longer remain in that forlorn condition; baniſhed from the preſence of God, and from the Society of his People.*

And till this was effected, they were in anguiſh of mind, and bitterneſs of Spirit: looking upon themſelves as loſt men, who had the ſentence of death paſſed upon them: from which they begged, in ſack-

cloth

cloth and aſhes, that they might be delivered.

Upon which things when I reflect, I am amazed, and cannot but cry out, ſaying; Good God! how are we faln? What a diſmal decay is there of Chriſtian Piety among us? What an univerſal Lethargie hath ſeized us, in theſe Ages? Wherein we ſee men lying very contentedly under that, which the firſt Chriſtians thought the heavieſt Calamity: Nay, willingly refraining the holy Communion, and keeping themſelves from it, as unworthy of the benefit; and yet are not at all troubled at it.

What an alteration is this? What new, or rather no Chriſtianity is it; which teaches men now, to lie quietly in ſuch a condition as they themſelves confeſs makes them unfit for Communion with God; and never to think of bewailing it, and being reconciled to Him, whom they have thus hainouſly offended?

This is ſo ſad a conſideration, that it ought to awaken all good men, to call upon their people, and earneſtly beſeech them, to remember from whence they are faln, and repent, and do the firſt works. *When there was no need to uſe ſo*

many arguments, as I have repreſented, to prove this to be a Chriſtian Duty; nor ſo many motives, to perſwade men to the frequent practice of it: but they ran forwardly to the holy Communion; and were troubled, above meaſure, if they might not have the priviledge to receive it.

There were no quarrels then raiſed in thoſe days, againſt the manner of its Adminiſtration: no diſputes againſt the poſture, wherein it was received. The Miniſters of Chriſt had not their precious time taken up, in anſwering Objections, and ſatisfying Doubts and Scruples; much leſs did they ſtand in need of the aſſiſtance of the Civil Power to inforce the practice of this duty. Which all took to be a Commandment of our Lord and Maſter, to commemorate his wonderful love, and ſhew forth his death and paſſion for our ſakes; and therefore was no leſs chearfully and readily obeyed, than if they had been invited to the moſt delicious Feaſt, and promiſed to receive the greateſt largeſſes in the World.

That it may be ſo again, is the deſign of publiſhing theſe Papers; in which I have repreſented thoſe Truths, which, if they be weighed and laid to heart, will ſave us this labour for the future. For I have

ſhown

ſhown you a ſhort way to be free from all fears, and doubts about this matter: which is, not to leave your ſelves in uncertainty whether you ſhall go to Heaven or no; but by making that ſure, to make your ſelves fit for the Holy Communion: unto which you may go with an aſſured confidence, if you have any good hope to be admitted into the Society of the bleſſed in Heaven.

If that be out of doubt, you need not doubt of acceptance with Chriſt, at his holy Table. For which the beſt preparation is an holy Life; or a ſerious Reſolution of it for the future, if hitherto we have lived otherwiſe. What other Preparation had the Apoſtles, for the partaking of the firſt Euchariſt, with our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour? What other could they have, when Chriſtians received it every day? If we have this therefore, which is the main thing, let us not ſtand upon little niceties: nor waſte that time in queſtioning and debating, whether we be fit or no; which ought to be ſpent in doing this and other Chriſtian Duties, whereby we ſhall be every day fitter to have Communion with our Saviour.

Remember, that it is in actions of Piety, *as it is in thoſe of* Policy. *A Wiſdom that*

that is too ſcrupulous, commonly doth nothing for fear of doing ill. We read of Cities that have been taken, while the Senators were gravely deliberating how to preſerve them. Even ſo is it here too; over-much niceneſs about preparation, makes men never to be prepared. Therefore it is a fault; when it hinders that duty, which it keeps us ſtill thinking how to perform.

Let us not confound our ſelves with words, but underſtand the ſenſe of things: and then we ſhall not be perplexed, as many have been, in this buſineſs of Preparation.

Much leſs will any be affrighted from the holy Communion, by being commanded to kneel when they receive it. Which is no more than they do at their daily Prayers; and therefore ſhould the rather be inclined to do here, when we pray and give thanks for the greateſt bleſſings: which we cannot do in too humble a manner. We worſhip alſo and adore our Bleſſed Lord, in this holy action: and therefore, one would think, ſhould be diſpoſed of our ſelves, without any injunction, to fall down upon our Knees, in token of the worſhip which we give Him. Which is no Popiſh Ceremony; being not ſo much as injoyned by

that

that Church in the act of receiving; nor obſerved by the Pope *himſelf (who when he receives, rather* ſits, *or* leans a little forward, *upon his Throne) but an ancient devout Poſture of the beſt Chriſtians, which the people of the Roman Communion, obſerve, by long cuſtom, without bidding: And therefore ſhould much more be chearfully obſerved by us; when we are enjoyned to keep to the ancient reverence, wherewith the Saints of God received the pledges of our Saviour's love.*

Vouchſafe, I beſeech you, to give this ſmall Book, wherewith I preſent you, a careful Reading, and I doubt not it will free you, not only from theſe, but from all ſorts of ſcruples, if any of you be troubled with them; which now hinder many people, from the greateſt duty, and comfort too, of our holy Religion.

Which if you would be perſwaded to perform often; the profit *which would redound to you thereby, would be as great as the* Credit *which it would do to our Church and Religion. For no man can come ſeriouſly to the holy Communion; but with ſome Reſolutions of being better than he hath been: which Reſolutions are not preſently broken, but laſt for ſome time: And there-*

therefore if there were not too long a diſtance between one Communion and another, it is likely they might laſt for ever. For before the force of the firſt Reſolution were quite loſt, it would be backt and ſtrengthned with a ſecond: and ſo being re-inforced from time to time; while it remained in ſome power, would become ſo firm, that it would never be broken.

Make a trial, I earneſtly intreat you; and ſuffer not this pains, which I have taken to ſerve you, to be thrown away, without that good effect. Which it will not be, if you make the trial with the ſame ſeriouſneſs, wherewith I have written this Treatiſe. In which you will meet with nothing to entertain the fancy, not ſo much as with fine words and elegant compoſure; but with good ſtore, I think, of ſolid ſenſe, to inlighten the mind, to inform the judgment, to pierce the heart, to ſtir up holy devotion; nay, to turn the will, and produce godly Reſolutions: which if they be purſued, and have their fruit unto holineſs, will in the end bring you to Eternal Life.

And that ſuch Reſolutions may be both produced and purſued, I will here add one obſervation more, for the removing the greateſt

greateſt of thoſe hindrances to Holy Communion, which lie in the way of thoſe who pretend to Religion. It is this:

That Doubts and Scruples, being the weakneſs, and ſickneſs of the Soul, they that readily entertain them, and then ſuffer them to remain there quietly and peaceably, are in a very ill caſe; nay, ought to look upon themſelves as in a very dangerous condition. For it is a ſign all is naught within; and that they deceive themſelves with a vain opinion of their being Religious. For they who are truly ſo, groan under their doubts and ſcruples, as under a ſore Diſeaſe; and therefore will not let them long dwell with them, but ſeek with all ſpeed to have ſatisfaction: which when it is offered, they receive with all readineſs of mind, and are not loth to be cured; but rejoyce that they are ſet at liberty to ſerve God without impediment, and that there is nothing left in their Souls to oppoſe their duty.

Whereas bad people in a quite contrary way, give admiſſion to thoſe ſcruples and doubts into their minds, with a ſecret pleaſure; and having entertained them, let them reſt, and take up their lodging there very willingly: becauſe they will plead their excuſe,

excuſe, they fancy, for not doing their duty; and be a defence to their lazineſs, Worldly-mindedneſs, and other naughty affections.

In ſhort, Doubts and Scruples never ariſe in good mens minds without grief, nor ſtay there without much trouble; and therefore they long to be rid of them; and are glad when they are diſcharged; becauſe they hinder the performance of their Chriſtian Duty: but bad men not only liſten to them willingly, but embrace them as welcome Gueſts, which they cheriſh, and never part withal, without difficulty, and ſome ſort of inward diſpleaſure; becauſe they deſire the Worldly Spirit that is in them ſhould not be left without all excuſe, but have ſomething to ſay for it ſelf, when it is preſſed by the force of Religion, againſt its inclinations.

Search, and try your ſelves by this mark, and the Lord give you a right judgment in all things, for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake. In whom I remain

Your Faithful Servant,

S. Patrick.

Diſcourſe I.

THE NECESSITY OF RECEIVING THE Holy Communion.

THE neglect of the Holy Communion of Chriſt's Body and Bloud was ſo general, and ſo long continued, in the late diſtracted times, being laid aſide in many whole Pariſhes of this Kingdom for near twenty years together, that in ſome Ages of the Church it would have been interpreted a downright Apoſtaſie from Chriſt, and a renunciation of the Chriſtian Faith.

And

And, though, bleſſed be God ſince the Happy Reſtauration of his Majeſty to his Throne, and the ſettlement of the Church upon its ancient foundations, it hath not been ſo generally neglected; yet it is not ſo much frequented as it ought to be.

No, not upon ſuch great and ſolemn days as this; when we are aſſembled to commemorate that ſtupendous Grace, which our Lord purchaſed for us by his precious Bloud, and beſtowed upon his Church, in ſending the *Holy Ghoſt the Comforter:* to be a Witneſs of his Reſurrection and Exaltation at God's right hand; and to confirm us in the belief of all that he hath taught and appointed in his Church.

For we content our ſelves only with the *Common Prayers* (and I wiſh I could ſay, that they are duly attended) and with the *Sermon:* and then turn our backs on that part of the Divine Service, which is properly Chriſtian; and conſequently is above all other, moſt acceptable unto Chriſt, and unto his Holy Spirit.

Which I ſhall therefore at this time preſs upon your Conſciences; as a means to revive that ancient Devotion, where-

with

with ſuch Feſtivals as this was kept: which now, alas! is wanting among us. And I ſhall do it from thoſe words of S. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* xi. 26. wherein he recommends this duty unto us upon this particular account; that *as oft as we eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, we do ſhow the Lord's Death till he come.*

In which words it is eaſie to obſerve theſe *three* practical truths. The *two* firſt whereof are plainly ſuppoſed; and the *other* is affirmed and enjoyned.

I. The *firſt* thing here ſuppoſed is; that it is a Chriſtian Duty, *to eat this Bread, and drink this Cup*, here ſpoken of; that is, to receive the Holy Sacrament of Chriſt's Body and Bloud.

II. The *ſecond* is, that it is a Chriſtian Duty, which ought to be *often* performed. And then,

III. It is here plainly aſſerted, that when it is performed, the thing deſigned in it, and which we ought to aim at, is, *to ſhow the Lord's Death till he come.*

The laſt of theſe will be ſufficiently explained, in the handling of the other two; *viz. the Duty*; and the *Frequent repetition of it*: unto which I ſhall confine

fine my Diſcourſe. And of the *firſt* at this time.

I.

THAT it is a Chriſtian Duty, incumbent upon every one of us, *to eat this Bread, and drink this Cup:* that is, to receive the Sacrament of Chriſt's Body and Bloud.

This is ſuppoſed in the words. Which are not to be underſtood as a meer permiſſion, that we may do this, if we think good, and when we think good: but as a command of ſomething we ought to do.

For when he tells us what it is we do, when we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, (in which we ſhow forth Chriſt's Death) it plainly implies that it muſt be done, and is not left to our choice, whether we will ſhow forth the Death of our Lord or no.

Of which more anon: when I have laid ſome other things before you, which will convince you, if they be conſidered, of the Obligation that lies upon you, to the ſerious performance of this Duty.

And for our clear and orderly proceeding, I ſhall caſt my Diſcourſe into this method.

I. *Firſt,*

I. *Firſt*, I ſhall ſhow you, that there is a plain inſtitution of this Sacrament; and a command that it ſhould be received. And then,

II. *Secondly*, I ſhall ſhow from the practice of the Apoſtles (after that time when they firſt received it with our Saviour) that it was no temporary command; but of Everlaſting Obligation.

III. *Thirdly*, That there is more than their practice to interpret the meaning and obligation of this command.

IV. *Fourthly*, That in this Diſcourſe of S. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, there are evident proofs of the neceſſity of its performance.

V. *Fifthly*, That the very Text ſhows the ſame, by the end for which it was inſtituted.

VI. *Laſtly*, That all theſe reaſons are exemplified, by the practice of the Univerſal Church of Chriſt.

I.

And *firſt*, let it be conſidered that this Holy Sacrament, is a Divine Inſtitution, Ordained, Commanded, and required by Chriſt Himſelf. Who, the ſame night that he was betrayed, *took*

Bre. d

Bread and bleſſed it, and brake it, and gave it to his Diſciples, and ſaid, Take, Eat, This is my Body. And he took the Cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, ſaying, Drink ye all of it: For this is my Bloud of the New Teſtament, which is ſhed for many, for the remiſſion of Sins, Matth. xxvi. 26, 27, 28.

Here is as manifeſt an Inſtitution of this Sacrament, and as formal a Command to *take* and *eat* and *drink* what Chriſt then gave, as can be contrived in words. Unleſs they be plainer which we read in other places: for the Inſtitution is recorded by the two next Evangeliſts, S. *Mark* and S. *Luke*; and here again, in this Chapter, by S. *Paul*. Which two laſt named ſay, that our Saviour added theſe words in the Inſtitution of this Sacrament; *This do in remembrance of me*, Luk. xxii. 19. 1 *Cor.* xi. 24, 25. Which enjoin this duty by as expreſs a Command, as thoſe of old; *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy:* And, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother.* Which may henceforth be blotted out of the number of the Commandments, if we take this to be none; *This do in remembrance of me.* For we can ſee no difference at all in the way and man-

manner of the expreſſions, wherein theſe things are delivered: much leſs any ſuch difference, as makes the former to be enacting words (as Lawyers ſpeak) and the latter to enact nothing.

Now, if there were nothing but this expreſs command alone, to be urged for this duty, one would expect, it ſhould be ſufficient to awaken every man to the performance, who hopes to find mercy with God, and to be ſaved by Chriſt Jeſus. *For ye are my Friends* (ſaith he himſelf, who knew no other terms of it, *Joh.* xv. 14.) *if ye do whatſoever I command you.* Which he had ſaid before, in the very firſt words of the Goſpel for this day, *John.* xiv. 15. *If you love me, keep my Commandments.*

How are we then the Friends of Chriſt? Where is our love to him; if we do not this, which is one of the things that he hath commanded, in as downright and ſolemn terms, as any other thing whatſoever? His Friends? No; *He that ſhall break one of the leaſt of my Commandments*, ſaith he again, *and teach men ſo, he ſhall be leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven:* that is he ſhall not have any ſhare therein; but be ſlighted and rejected,

jected, as he ſlighted that Commandment, *Matth.* v. 19.

And therefore what will become of thoſe, (I beſeech you conſider it) who break not *one of the leaſt*, but *one of the greateſt* of his Commandments; as this certainly is? For it is his *laſt*, and dying Commandment; and therefore not the *leaſt*. *The ſame night that he was betrayed, he took Bread*, &c. (ſaith S. *Paul* here in this Chapter, *v.* 23.) The very night before he ſuffered, he inſtituted this Sacrament, and enjoined his Diſciples to *do this in remembrance of him*: as a means no doubt to make all the reſt of his Commands the better obſerved; by preſerving him, and his wondrous love perpetually in their memory. Where will they appear then, who refuſe, or neglect to do this? Or what will they be able to ſay for themſelves, who have no regard to ſuch a remarkable Commandment?

For ſuppoſe it had come only in the form of a requeſt, and not with the Authority of a Command; could any ſenſible heart have refuſed to perform it? What? not yield to the deſire of ſuch a Friend, as well as ſuch a Maſter; who hath

hath laid ſuch obligations upon us, as none of mankind ever received, nor can receive, but from him alone? This is ſtrange: this is unaccountable. For all the World looks on him, as a man of a barbarous nature, void of all humanity; who denies the laſt ſuit of a dying perſon; though a meer ſtranger to him: eſpecially, when it will put him to little or no trouble; but rather be a pleaſure to perform it. What a wretched Creature then is he, by what monſtrous name ſhall we call him, who puts away from him the laſt requeſt of a dying Friend, and of a great Friend; one that hath merited ten thouſand times more of him, than his requeſt comes to? This adds the moſt hideous ingratitude to his Crime; and is moreover ſuch a ſhameful violation of the ſacred Laws of Friendſhip; that it makes him moſt odious both to God and man for ever.

And yet their guilt is not ſo ſmall as this; who mind not thoſe laſt words of our bleſſed Saviour, *Do this in remembrance of me.* Which are more than a *Requeſt*; nay, more than a *command:* being his *laſt Will and Teſtament*, which he was about to ſeal with his Bloud:

and the *laſt Will* of him, who loved us better than his own life; who died, that we might live; who of his own accord laid down his life, which no body had power to take away. For he had all things, even Angels themſelves at his command; and more particularly, was our moſt gracious Lord and Maſter, and hath the moſt unqueſtionable Authority over every one of us.

Who cannot therefore neglect this his laſt Will and Teſtament, without the moſt dreadful aggravations of ſuch diſobedience, nay contempt; as will remain without a Name, till that terrible day, when he ſhall come himſelf to charge men with this guilt of ſlighting his dying words.

Think of it I beſeech you, what ſort of command this is. And (to uſe the words of an Excellent Man) if you have any ſenſe of ſhame, you *cannot*; any ſenſe of duty, you *dare not*; any ſenſe of love, you *will not* neglect it: but come as oft as you have opportunity, and *do this in remembrance of him.* Whoſe Command ought to over-awe you, as he is our Lord; ſince he might have expected to have prevailed with you, by his bare intreaties, as he is our Friend. For

For it may be further added unto this conſideration, that it is a command of a peculiar nature: having no reaſon for its performance but purely our regard to his will and pleaſure, and our true love and affection to him; which is hereby tried, more than by other duties of Religion. Unto which there is ſomething in nature to incline us; and it is made our manifeſt intereſt by the frame of our Souls and Bodies, and by the conſtitution of that Society one man hath with another; to be juſt (for inſtance) and merciful; to be ſober, faithful and grateful; to live peaceably with our Neighbours, and obediently to our Governours; and to commend our ſelves alſo to God by Prayer, and to give him thanks, *&c.* But of *doing this*, we ſhould never have thought, had not our Lord required it. And therefore the performance of it, is a pure reſpect to him; the meer effect of our Faith in him; and a ſingular proof of the love and the reverence, which we bear towards him: as the neglect of it is an evident demonſtration, that whatſoever natural vertue men may have, they have no Chriſtian; and ſo have no title to go to that bleſſed place, where Chriſt our Lord and Saviour is.

This is the *Firſt*: upon which I have ſtaid the longer, becauſe it lays the Foundation of all that follows. For

II.

Secondly, Upon this *Precept* of Chriſt, the Apoſtles built their *practice*, after his Reſurrection from the dead, and Aſcenſion to Heaven; from whence he ſent the Holy Ghoſt to confirm that which he had inſtituted and ordained. For immediately upon this, on the very day that the Holy Ghoſt came down, the number of Chriſtians being inlarged by the addition of three thouſand Souls to the Church, all thoſe Converts *continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles doctrine and fellowſhip, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers*, Acts ii. 42.

Which ſhows that they did not underſtand, the command of our Saviour about this matter, to be one of thoſe, which the Hebrews call the *precept of an hour* (that is, to be obſerved only at that preſent time, when it was commanded) but to be of perpetual obligation, in all future times: For as ſoon as ever any man became a Chriſtian, he lookt upon this as one part of his Chriſtian duty; as much as hearing the Sermons of the Apoſtles, and Prayers.

I am

I am loth to ſpend the time, in going about to prove againſt vain Cavillers, that *by breaking of bread* is here meant, this holy action of receiving the Communion: and not their bare eating together. But to give full ſatisfaction in that matter, let it be briefly conſidered: *Firſt*, that *Breaking of Bread* is here placed in the midſt, between other holy actions, *Preaching*, *fellowſhip*, (or communicating to one anothers neceſſities) and *Prayers*; and therefore, in all reaſon, muſt be concluded to be it ſelf of that nature: not a *common*, but an *holy* action.

And beſides, *ſecondly*, their eating at a common Table, if it be at all mentioned in this Chapter (*Acts* ii.) under the phraſe of *breaking bread*, is ſpoken of *v.* 46. and therefore not intended here. No, nor there neither, I ſhall ſhow hereafter, for even in thoſe words alſo [*they continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from houſe to houſe, or at home*, &c.] the *breaking of bread* belongs to the holy Communion. And to put all out of doubt, thus the *Syriack* (an ancient Tranſlation) underſtands it; expreſly turning it thus, *in the Euchariſt*. As it doth alſo *Act.* xx. 7.

Upon the firſt day of the week, when the Diſciples came together to break bread, Paul *preached unto them,* &c. that is, *when they came to receive the Euchariſt,* (ſaith that Tranſlation) which was a part of their *Lords days* work; nay, the principal part; for this was the thing for which the Diſciples came together, and not meerly to hear the Apoſtle preach. And who can give any reaſon, why it ſhould not be ſo now, as it was then? when in familiar ſpeech it was as uſual with them to ſay, they would go to Church to receive the holy Communion; as it is with us to ſay in theſe days, we will go to Church to Prayers, or to hear a Sermon.

III.

But more than this, not only the practice of the Apoſtles, and firſt Believers, after they were divinely inlightned by the Holy Ghoſt, expounds the meaning and the obligation of this Precept to be perpetual: but Chriſt himſelf ſhowed it ſo to be, after he went to Heaven, and was exalted at God's right hand. For appearing to S. *Paul*, to make him one of his Apoſtles, and, in order to it, revealing

vealing himſelf and the whole Chriſtian Religion to him, which he gave him commiſſion and Authority to preach; He declared this to be a part of his Will, and a piece of his holy Religion. *For I have received of the Lord* (ſaith he in this Chapter, *v.* 23, 24, *&c.*) *that which I alſo delivered unto you, that the Lord Jeſus, the ſame night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and ſaid, Take, Eat, This is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the ſame manner alſo, he took the Cup, ſaying, This is the New Teſtament*, &c.

Obſerve here, an evident proof, that what our Lord did with his Apoſtles at his laſt Supper, he intended ſhould be done by them and by others, when he was gone. For ſending one, who was not then with him, nor had any knowledge of him while he was on Earth, to preach his Goſpel; he gives him particular inſtructions about this matter; to take care to ſee this done, in remembrance of him. So S. *Paul* (who was the man to whom he appeared, and gave a ſpecial Commiſſion, after he went to Heaven) avows to the *Corinthians* in this

place: telling them, that he delivered nothing to them but what he had received of the Lord: and what he delivered to them, was this, that they ſhould do what the Lord *Jeſus* hath done with his Apoſtles, in remembrance of him.

This he *received* from him: that is, it was of the Lord's Inſtitution, and to be practiſed by his order and ſpecial command; and therefore called, *the Lord's Supper*, v. 20. *When ye come together into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper.* Where it is called the *Lord's Supper*, not becauſe it was eaten by the Lord with his Apoſtles (for at that Supper the *Corinthians* were not preſent; nor was that now done, in this place where they came together) but becauſe it was inſtituted by the Lord: both then, when he eat that Supper with his Apoſtles; and now again, when he appeared to S. *Paul*, and required him to ſee this practiſed, in the Churches which he converted. And accordingly, was now practiſed in this Church at *Corinth*; to whom this Diſcourſe of S. *Paul* is directed.

IV.

In which we find many things more, to prove this to be a neceſſary Chriſtian Duty:

Duty: which was the *fourth* head, mentioned in the beginning.

I ſhall ſingle out *two* which will make it evidently appear to all unprejudiced minds.

I. The *firſt* is very remarkable; that the Apoſtle takes a great deal of pains, and ſpends a great deal of time, in ſhowing the manner, how the holy Communion ought to be celebrated among them. Which he would not have done, if this had not been a neceſſary duty, incumbent on them, by vertue of Chriſt's Command, and a Divine Inſtitution.

Do but conſider this, I beſeech you, and be at the pains to ponder at your leiſure, how ſerious, earneſt, and laborious the Apoſtle is here (in this eleventh Chapter of his Epiſtle) to make the *Corinthians* ſenſible, by a long Diſcourſe about it, after what manner they ought to approach to the Table of the Lord: reproving their ſcandalous behaviour at the Communion, directing them how to reform it, and make a due preparation to receive the benefit thereof. And then tell me, or rather tell your ſelves, was there any cauſe, for a reaſonable man, to write ſo much

to ſhow how, and after what manner the thing ſhould be done, if the very doing of the thing had not been neceſſary, and under the obligation of a Command?

Can the manner and way of doing an action, be matter of duty; and yet that action it ſelf be no duty at all? Or can a man of common ſenſe be very ſolicitous in giving directions, how men ſhould order themſelves in a place, and about a buſineſs; into which they may never come, but let it alone?

Can the Apoſtle be ſuppoſed, to ſay, ſo and ſo you ought to eat this Bread and drink this Cup; and yet there be no command tying them to eat it and drink it at all? And ſo and ſo you ought to prepare your ſelves to partake of Chriſt's Body and Bloud; and yet after that preparation, they might chuſe, whether they would do the thing for which they were to be prepared?

Surely we cannot imagine the Apoſtle to have had ſo much idle time to ſpare; nay, to be ſo impertinent, as to buſie himſelf in ordering the circumſtances of an holy action; if the action it ſelf had not been a neceſſary, nay, a very weighty duty, and of exceeding great moment:

ment: which therefore he was highly concerned, and took due care, ſhould be duly performed.

II. To which add this conſideration: that had not this been a divine Inſtitution, and, the practice according to it, a duty incumbent on them; it is not to be conceived, that the Apoſtle would have ſuffered the *Corinthians* to have run ſo great a hazard, as they did, by the rude manner of doing that action; if they might innocently have omitted it; and, without any guilt, not have done it at all. Nor would the *Corinthians* themſelves have been ſo unreaſonably cruel to their own Souls, as to have incurred the dreadful danger of Damnation and Death, by an unprepared participation of this Sacrament; if they could have ſatisfied themſelves that it was no duty to participate; or not of ſuch conſequence, but that it might with ſafety be let alone.

He that eateth and drinketh unworthily (ſaith the Apoſtle) *eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf: and for this cauſe many are weak, and ſickly among you, and many ſleep.* That is, the divine judgment being paſſed againſt you, hath ſeized on you; and ſtruck many of you with

with ſickneſſes; others with infirmities, aches and pains, and ſome with Death; for your riotous eating of the Supper of the Lord. Doth it not concern you then, unleſs you be content to lie ſtill under this ſcourge of God, till you be all cut off, to be better adviſed, and not expoſe your ſelves in this manner, to the wrath of God: which, it is plain by terrible Executions, is more than kindled againſt you?

Now, unto what courſe doth he direct them, that they might avoid theſe Judgments? Doth he adviſe them to abſtain from the Holy Communion, for fear of profaning it! to forbear to come to the Table of the Lord, leſt there he ſtretcht out his hand againſt them, and gave them their Deaths wound?

This had been the ſhorteſt, and the ſafeſt way, according to the ignorant reſolutions men make in this preſent Age, to prevent the danger of Damnation: unto which the Apoſtle, no doubt, would have charitably directed them; if he had not known that the thing it ſelf was a duty, and ſuch abſtinence from it a ſin.

He could not otherways have refrained, when he beheld the Sword of Divine Venge-

Vengeance thus hanging over their Heads, and many already lie bleeding under it, being ſtrucken down to the ground by Sickneſſes, Plagues and Death; he could not I ſay in this lamentable caſe have abſtained, from calling to them with the greateſt earneſtneſs and compaſſion; ſaying, Why do you thus venture your Souls and Bodies to deſtruction? Why do you not rather ſtay away, and wholly forbear to approach to the Table of the Lord, where you are in danger to be undone, for your unworthy receiving the ſacred pledges of God's love?

But we hear no ſuch language, becauſe the Apoſtle had not *thus learnt Chriſt*; nor thus *received of the Lord*. Who commanded & expected that they ſhould not abſtain from the Sacrament (as the manner now is) but come to it: not rudely indeed, as they did, but in a holy, decent and prepared manner. Which it had been in vain to diſcourſe of; if it would have been as well, or would have ſufficed, to abſtain from the act of receiving.

This was an invention, not thought of in thoſe early days: when they took themſelves not to be *Chriſtians*, if they did not frequent the Holy Communion;

as

as S. *Paul* proves they were not *good* Chriſtians, if they did not take care to come in an holy manner unto it.

That's the thing to which he preſſes them; and the only way, he knew of, to avoid Damnation. Abſtaining from the Communion, would not ſecure them: *but let a man examine himſelf; and ſo let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup*, ver. 28. Not to eat and drink of that holy food, he could not give them a licence. He had no ſuch Authority; but lay under an obligation to enjoyn the doing of the thing, and to preſs it earneſtly: as a duty that could neither be ſafely omitted, nor practiſed without ſerious Examination of themſelves, that they *might not come together to condemnation*, v. 34. To *come together* for this purpoſe, to eat and drink that Bread and that Cup, there was a neceſſity: their only care was, that it might not be *to condemnation.*

Which things, being well conſidered, do convincingly demonſtrate, that this is not only a duty, but a weighty duty, ſtrictly enjoyned, and not to be omitted: no, not in that Church, where the profane doing of it, had brought down

Death

Death and deſtruction upon them from Heaven.

V.

The ſame is evident from the end, for which our Lord inſtituted this Sacrament, and commanded us to receive it: which is, *the publication of the Lord's Death till he come.* That's the meaning of this word καταγγέλλετε, *Ye do ſhow:* you do *publiſh*, the word ſignifies, and *tell it abroad:* you profeſs this, and *declare* it to all the World, that Chriſt died for you, and is Lord over you, having purchaſed you by his Bloud; and that you own him ſo to be, and are the Servants and Worſhippers of that *Jeſus*; who gave himſelf to be Crucified, and to die for you.

This is the general meaning of this holy action. Wherein we publickly own Chriſt, and profeſs his Religion: and give it out to all the World, who ſee what we do, that we are his, and that we are ſenſible of it, nay, glory in it, and intend to continue his for ever?

Now, who can have the confidence to call himſelf a Chriſtian, and not think he ſtands bound thus to own Chriſt Crucified?

ed? And therefore he is bound to do that, whereby he doth own him: which is to receive the holy Sacrament. Which as often as we do, we ſhow forth the Lord's Death: and as often as we neglect, we do as good as ſay we are aſhamed of him, and of his Croſs; or that we repent of our Chriſtian Profeſſion.

For if to do this, be to ſhow forth Chriſt's Death, then not to do it, is to ſtifle and ſmother it, as much as in us lies: ſo that no ſuch thing as the Death of our Lord ſhould be publiſhed, or known in the World.

This I am ſure is a true conſequence: and our neglect of this duty, will be thus interpreted by our bleſſed Lord, when he ſhall come to take cognizance of it.

Why? will ſome ſay, we teſtifie the contrary, every time we ſay the Creed: when we make an open and ſolemn confeſſion of our Faith in him.

But let ſuch perſons obſerve, how they argue in this againſt themſelves. For our Lord, in whom they profeſs to believe, requires that we ſhould not meerly in *words*, though never ſo expreſs, but in plain *actions* alſo repreſent his Death and Paſſion for our ſakes; and thereby our high obligations to him. That's

That's the doctrine of the Apoſtle in this place. For to what end do you *break* the Bread, but to ſhow the *breaking*, *i. e.* the wounding and crucifixion of the Lord's Body? And to what end do you *pour out* the Wine; but to repreſent the *ſhedding* of the Lord's Bloud, by thoſe wounds he received for our ſake? And for what end do you eat that Bread, and drink that Cup, but to ſhew that we are made one with him, and have Communion with him in his Death and Sufferings?

This is the *general* end of this Sacrament, gratefully to commemorate the Death of Chriſt; to ſhow, expreſs, declare, and publiſh his Death for us, and our intereſt in it, in plain and ſignificant actions. Which not being performed, in obedience to his Command, the Faith which we profeſs in him doth but condemn us of ſhameful infidelity to him.

As for the *particular* ends of it, they are as many as the uſes are, which we can make of his Death and Paſſion. Wherein, whatſoever love God the Father ſhowed unto us, in giving his dearly beloved Son to die for us; whatſoever kindneſs God the Son expreſſed, in offering him-

himſelf freely unto the Death, and making himſelf a Sacrifice for our ſins: and whatſoever confirmation God the Holy Ghoſt hath ſince given us of this love, and this kindneſs; it is all here commemorated.

Whatſoever worſhip, honour, and ſervice is due to our ever-bleſſed Redeemer, and moſt bountiful Benefactor, it is all here acknowledged; and after a moſt peculiar manner, and with a ſpecial reſpect to him, performed.

Whatſoever ſtrength we can derive from our Feaſting with Chriſt upon his Sacrifice, and from the oblation we make of our ſelves, Souls and Bodies unto him, with moſt powerful Prayers and Thankſgivings: whatſoever comfort we can enjoy in Communion with God, and in Communion with his Church: whatſoever Peace we can have in renewing our Covenant of Friendſhip with him, in remiſſion of ſins, in receiving the power of the Holy Ghoſt, in the hopes of eternal life, in all holy intercourſes between Heaven and us: all this is to be expected, and may be obtained in the Celebration of this Holy Sacrament.

And therefore as this one thing, the Annun-

Annunciation or publiſhing of Chriſt's Death and our relation to him, is the general end; and theſe comforts, theſe eſtabliſhments in Faith, and hope, and love and obedience, are the particular ends of this Inſtitution: So all theſe lay a ſtrong obligation upon us duly to obſerve it; unleſs we be content to renounce our intereſt in Chriſt: who hath made this the moſt ſolemn badge, and authentick mark of our Chriſtianity; and the great means of conveying to us the benefits of his Death and Paſſion, as well as a pledge to aſſure us thereof.

And this one argument alone, taken from the end of its Inſtitution, is ſufficient to convince us that this Sacrament was intended by Chriſt, to be continued in his Church *till he come* (as my Text ſpeaks) that is, till his laſt coming to judge the World: for till then it will be uſeful, nay neceſſary for all theſe holy ends which I have briefly named. And whoſoever he be that hopes for mercy at that dreadful day, without the careful performance of this duty, is a preſumptuous perſon, and vainly expects it: becauſe he lives in the neglect of the very beſt way of preparing himſelf, for that

that great account, which muſt then be made of all our actions.

VI.

But now let us ſuppoſe, that the words of the Inſtitution had been ſo ambiguous, that they might poſſibly (if we had had no further explication of them) have been thought to be limited to that particular Feaſt which Chriſt did eat with his Diſciples, and extended no further: yet the practice of the Apoſtles, and the practice of the Church in the Apoſtolical times, and in all ſucceeding times ever ſince (which are the beſt Interpreters of the Scriptures) do expound the words to be a laſting Inſtitution; and an Inſtitution of ſuch moment, that it ought to be moſt punctually obſerved.

And did not Chriſt's own Apoſtles, think you, underſtand their Maſters meaning, when he inſtituted this Sacrament? Or if they had not underſtood him then, would they not afterward have underſtood him; when the ſpirit was ſo plentifully poured out upon them, that they diſcovered the greateſt ſecrets: even the thoughts and deſigns of men's hearts?

Hath

Hath the univerſal Church in, and after thoſe times, and during all Ages ſince, lived in an error; and taken up an unneceſſary practice, or made too much ſtir about it, and been too buſie and officious in it? Was there not in this very Church of *Corinth* (as the Apoſtle ſhows in the next Chapter) a miraculous abundance of miraculous gifts? *the ſpirit of wiſdom, the ſpirit of knowledge, the ſpirit of faith, the gifts of healing, of working miracles, of propheſying, of diſcerning ſpirits, of divers kind of tongues, of interpretation of tongues?* And could not all thoſe gifts, all thoſe ſpiritual powers, and ſupernatural aſſiſtances, inable them to underſtand the words of Chriſt's Inſtitution? Was not that indeed, the true *Age of the Spirit?* Were they not infinitely more inlightned, than any can pretend to be now, or hope to be hereafter? And could they not diſcover by their illuminations (if it had been true) that which ſome vain *Enthuſiaſts* dream of, that where there was ſuch plenty of the Spirit, there was no need of ſuch outward Ordinances, as the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper? Could they not ſee this ſo clearly,

and

and be ſo ſenſible of it, as that they ſhould not have been ſo much concerned, as they were, about the practice of this duty, in that Church, if there was no need of it, or our Saviour never intended it ſhould be of much moment? Nay, as that they ſhould not have with ſuch danger to themſelves (as I noted before) have repeated it in their Church, if our Saviour never intended any ſuch repetition?

Surely, theſe things carry ſuch evidence in them, that to add more light, in ſo clear a caſe, would be (as we ſay) to hold a Candle to the Sun. And therefore I ſhall here make an end of my proof: ſuppoſing I have ſaid rather too much than too little in this argument; and that you ſtand fully convinced, the Celebration of this holy Communion, is not only of divine Inſtitution, to be uſed by the Church in all Ages, but muſt of neceſſity be duly practiſed by us, if we hope to be ſaved.

And if that be true, hearken then I beſeech you what follows thereupon.

I.

What ſhall we then think of thoſe, who

who live in the conſtant neglect of it?

Suffer me to propoſe this ſingle plain queſtion to you. Whether the wilful continuance in any known ſin, be not a damnable ſtate? A ſtate of direct oppoſition to our Saviour; and conſequently a ſtate wherein there is no Salvation? Can this be denied? and it is as undeniable, that a conſtant neglect of a known Precept of Chriſt, a Precept ſo univerſally owned, ſo univerſally practiſed, as you have heard, in the Church of God; is a wilful ſin. What is it elſe? or what can make a ſin wilful, but acting againſt a clear knowledge, and conviction, and means and opportunities, of doing otherways?

Conſider of it, I beſeech you, again and again. If wilful ſins do not actually damn, being continued in; let us know, for what ſins they are, for which men are damned: or do you think there is any ſuch thing as damnation at all? Certainly, if there be damnation, it is for wilful ſins: and if there be wilful ſins, they are ſins deliberately committed againſt a known Law: and if there be any known Law among Chriſtians, this is one; that they ought to receive this holy

holy Sacrament, in remembrance of thei
Lord and Maſter's Death for them : an
therefore the conſtant, the affected, th
upbraided, the reproved, and yet no
reformed, omiſſion of this duty, is mo
certainly a deliberate, nay a preſumptu
ous omiſſion of it ; or elſe there is n
ſuch thing as preſumption in the World

What will you think then of you
ſelves, I ask again, if from time to time
from month to month ; nay, from yea
to year, you wilfully neglect a plain, a
evident, an undoubted Precept of ou
bleſſed Lord and Saviour? a Precep
commanding us to commemorate hi
Death, to repreſent his Paſſion, to ad
mire his Love, to praiſe his kindneſs, t
partake of his Graces, to ſhare with hin
in his comforts, to knit our ſelves faſte
to him in holy Obedience, and to rejoyc
in hope of feaſting with him and all th
Company of the bleſſed in his Heavenl
Kingdom?

If you have not been hitherto convin
ced of this duty, your ſin is the leſs ; an
may in ſome meaſure admit of an excuſe
But if, being now convinced, you ſtand
out, and ſtill neglect the performance o
it ; then can you not in any wiſe have
the

the leaſt excuſe for your wilful diſobedience. And if you be not now convinced, by theſe things which have been repreſented to your minds; I muſt ſay, it is becauſe you wilfully refuſe, becauſe you will not receive conviction. And this wilful refuſal to be convinced, this ſhutting your Eyes againſt the clear light wherein this duty is ſhown to you, is ſtill another wilful ſin; added to the preſumptuous neglect of the holy Communion.

II.

Satisfie your ſelves about what I have now propoſed: determine what is like to become of you, if you continue in a wilful ſin (as the neglect of the holy Communion moſt certainly is, when the will of Chriſt, in an expreſs Law commanding it, is made known to you, and preſſed upon you) and then I may be the leſs earneſt in beſeeching you, to remain no longer under this heavy guilt. For how can you, with your Eyes open, run your ſelves into Eternal Damnation? what need is there that I ſhould beſeech you, not to throw your ſelves headlong into the Fire that never ſhall be extinguiſhed? It is ſufficient to intreat you

once more, to conſider what hath been ſaid, to believe it, and to keep it in mind: and then you will make an amends for former neglects, by a more careful and zealous performance of this duty, in time to come.

Eſpecially if you conſider how by neglecting this duty, you neglect all thoſe invaluable bleſſings, which are repreſented, offered, and communicated to us in the right performance thereof.

This is the only Argument whereby I ſhall further urge you: but I will preſs it in a few particulars.

I. And *firſt*, there is nothing wherein all Chriſtians do more univerſally agree than this, that God in giving his Son to die for us, demonſtrated the greateſt love that was ever ſhown to mankind. Which incomparable love we all agree likewiſe, is repreſented, expreſſed and recommended to us, in the Communion of the Body and Bloud of Chriſt. And can we think fit then, to neglect this holy Communion? For do we not therein neglect and under-value that wonderful love, which in the holy Communion is moſt effectually repreſented, laid before us, and exhibited unto us? Is

Is the love of God ſo inconſiderable a thing, as to be ſlighted and paſſed by with careleſs neglect? Is the Death of Chriſt, wherein that love appeared, ſo ſmall a thing, as to be forgotten, or ſeldom thought of; and that although he hath inſtituted a Sacrament on purpoſe for its Commemoration? And do we not forget and ſlight it, when we regard not that Inſtitution, and make no ſuch Commemoration?

I know how loth men are to yield to theſe convictions; and how deſirous they are to ſupport themſelves in a belief, that they neither undervalue that love, nor forget this Death, though they do not attend at the Table of the Lord. For they remember both, they ſay, in their own private thoughts; and give God thanks for his ineſtimable love in giving Chriſt to die for them.

But ſuppoſe they ſay true; that they have ſuch a ſenſe of God and of our bleſſed Saviour; as not altogether to let them ſlip out of their minds, nor wholly forget their benefits: yet let them weigh this ſeriouſly, that *where a known divine inſtitution, appointed on purpoſe for the Commemoration of Chriſt's Death, and of*

God's love therein manifeſted, is neglected; it muſt be confeſſed that the ſame love of God, and Death of Chriſt is in a very ſinful degree undervalued and forgotten. For no Friend will think himſelf remembred by him; who lays aſide that very thing, which he left him, and ſolemnly deſired him to wear, in token of his remembrance.

Let ſuch men conſider alſo, that they ſtand bound not only to remember or call to mind Chriſt's Death privately, but openly to make that ſolemn and publick Commemoration of it, which is commanded by our bleſſed Lord. And in like manner, it is not ſufficient to have a value of God's love; but we ought to ſhow our eſteem of it, in the practice of that Inſtitution, wherein that love is ſignally repreſented to us.

In brief; we deceive our ſelves if we imagine we remember God's love in the Death of Chriſt as we ought to do; while we do not expreſs and ſhow our remembrance by that ſign and token which he hath appointed as a Teſtimony thereof.

If we do it not in this way; He will look upon us as forgetful of him and of his love.

II. And

II. And by forgetting that, it is not to be conceived how much miſchief we do to our ſelves and others. For we are all agreed that the conſequence which S. *John* draws from what hath been now ſaid, is good and ſtrong; *Beloved, if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another*, 1 Joh. iv. 11. Which mutual love the Apoſtle preſſes by ſuch Arguments in that Epiſtle, as demonſtrate a man hath nothing of God in him, who wants this grace: which contains, at leaſt, one half of the duty of a Chriſtian.

Do we not need then to have this love inkindled, or rather inflamed, nouriſhed and increaſed in us, by all means? And is there any means ſo effectual, as the conſideration, the ſolemn conſideration how the great God hath loved us, though utterly unworthy of his love, nay deſerving his heavieſt diſpleaſure? And where is this repreſented ſo lively to us, as in the holy Communion? Which Chriſt hath alſo appointed on purpoſe, to be a ſacred Bond of love, unity, peace and concord among Chriſtians; by their all eating of one and the ſame Bread, and drinking of one and the ſame Cup.

Which while they neglect, how can they pretend to the love of God? or how can they hope to have this mutual love one to another, rooted in their hearts? when they never or ſeldom communicate together in the moſt holy things? never own that they are members one of another; nor link themſelves together by that common tye of Charity, which their Lord hath inſtituted, and commanded them to uſe, for this very end, among others; that they may be knit together in one body, be of one mind and heart, and live in peace?

No, they are all broken in pieces, they are torn in ſunder, and continue ſo; and hate and malign, and bite and devour one another: and that with a moſt implacable rage and malice, to the great ſcandal of Religion; the ſpoiling of humane Society; the danger of overturning Government; and thereby ruining all outwards comforts.

And ſhall we heighten this guilt by adding this aggravation to it, *that we love to have it ſo?*

If we have any kindneſs left one for another, nay any kindneſs for our ſelves, let us not refuſe the means of a cure: this

this Sovereign means, which alone will prove an effectual remedy. Being a remedy of God's own preſcription and appointment, for the quenching all our unnatural heats, and the killing all our unchriſtian hatreds, and the burying of all our animoſities and quarrels, ſo that they ſhall never riſe again: Or if they do, be immediately extinguiſhed, and laid again in their Graves, by laying a new obligation upon our ſelves in this Sacrament, to love one another; *and to walk in love, as Chriſt alſo hath loved us, and hath given himſelf for us, an offering and a ſacrifice to God for a ſweet ſmelling ſavour*, Eph. v. 2.

III. In which Sacrament I might repreſent how many comforts there are contained, beſides thoſe of love; comforts infinitely more ſatisfactory, than thoſe vain, thoſe periſhing pleaſures, of which ſenſual men are ſo greedy, that they make them neglect this holy Communion: and thereby loſe thoſe divine, thoſe heavenly joys, which Chriſt, in the ſerious uſe of it, imparts unto his members.

But, to ſhorten this Diſcourſe, let it ſuffice to ask you, what is there in the love of God towards Mankind, which you can think more valuable, than the *Covenant of Grace*, by which alone, you have the promiſe of remiſſion of ſins aſſured unto you? And conſequently, how can you forget that moſt precious bloud, which ratifies, which confirms and ſeals that gracious Covenant? Or how can you neglect that ſpecial means, which the love of God our Saviour hath ordained, for the preſerving the remembrance of his moſt precious bloud-ſhedding freſh in your minds.

If you do truly remember that bloud which was ſhed, that body which was broken for you; you muſt at the ſame time judge it fit and neceſſary, to demonſtrate you remember it, by making that Commemoration of it, which our Lord requires; and not neglect to ſee that repreſented to the Eye, and expreſſed by real actions lively ſignifying the Death of Chriſt; which you pretend gratefully to commemorate in your hearts.

It is much to be feared, that they do but deceive their own Souls, who pretend to the one without the other.

For

For did not God frame and faſhion you in your Mother's Womb? And doth not he who framed you there, know your frame and your mould better than you can do your ſelves? And did he not therefore appoint this outward repreſentation of his love, in the holy Communion, becauſe he knew otherwiſe you would not be ſufficiently ſenſible thereof? What other reaſon can there be aſſigned for this Inſtitution, but the wiſe goodneſs of God; who knows that divine things accommodated to ſenſe, do, by affecting the Eye, better affect the heart, than it would be affected without ſuch ſenſible applications? This is the reaſon, why he hath made ſpiritual things to become in great meaſure ſenſible; in accommodation to our nature, and compliance with our frame; which he beſt knows, becauſe it is of his own contrivance. Who hath clothed our Spirits with Fleſh: and therefore moves the inward powers by outward ſigns. Which if we ſlight, or neglect theſe means of being affected with ſpiritual things, which God, who moſt perfectly underſtands how our minds may be beſt moved, hath accommodated

and appointed for that end: it is evident we deſpiſe the Wiſdom of God; or are vainly conceited of our ſelves: and preſume to think that we can be as well affected, without theſe outward means and ſenſible helps which he hath inſtituted for our ſpiritual improvement.

A ſtrange preſumption, this! But which every one is guilty of, who contents himſelf with bare thinking of Chriſt and of his love in dying for us: without the uſe of thoſe ſenſible ſigns, which he hath appointed, to awaken our minds, unto a more lively and deep apprehenſion and ſenſe of his love, than any thing elſe can give us.

IV. To all which conſiderations let this be added; that the great ſupport and comfort, the very life of every Chriſtian Soul, is to be in a ſtate of Friendſhip with God; by continuing in the Holy Covenant we have made with him, and he with us in Chriſt *Jeſus*. If this be not preſerved carefully; all true joy in this World is loſt together with it.

Now,

Now, do you not find your ſelves too prone to break your Baptiſmal Vow; and thereby to violate that Covenant, wherein you ſtand ingaged, and ſacredly promiſed to keep? And ſhall not that Covenant, after you have violated it, be ſolemnly and ſpeedily renewed; that the breach between God and you may be healed, and you may notwithſtanding look upon him, as your Father? And is not the Sacrament of Chriſt's Body and Bloud appointed for this renewal? Do you know any other ſolemn way of being reconciled again?

What account then can be given of it, that ſo many having broken this Covenant, are not at all concerned to renew it? but remain ſeparated from God, and holy Communion with him? How come we to be ſo careleſs of our Souls, ſo negligent of God, ſo unconcerned in the Covenant of Grace, as wilfully, continuedly, from time to time to forbear that Holy Ordinance; wherein not only this Covenant is renewed, but ſo many mercies of God, as you have heard, commemorated and repreſented; ſo many joys, ſo many comforts and ſpiritual aſſiſtances communicated unto us?

There

There is no account to be given of this matter; no reaſon that can be aſſigned but only this: that men will not ſeriouſly conſider, either their duty, or their intereſt. Or if they do, when they are clearly repreſented to them, they forget and lay aſide all thoſe conſiderations; and do not immediately purſue them, whither they would lead them. And ſo they turn to ſomething elſe; which takes up their thoughts and their time, and ingages their affections: till they be carried away Captive by the Luſts of the Fleſh and of the World; beyond the power of any means, that we know of, to reſcue them from deſtruction.

But I hope better things of thoſe, who duly attend to what hath been ſaid; and that all thoſe who have not now prepared themſelves for this Holy Duty, of ſhowing forth the Lord's Death, whereby he purchaſed, among other bleſſings, the great gift of the Holy Ghoſt (which it would have been moſt proper, on this day, to have moſt ſolemnly acknowledged) will ſpeedily ſet themſelves about it; and be ready againſt the next opportunity: that is, againſt the next Sunday,

Sunday, or at leaſt the next after that; and ſo for the time to come be careful to perform this duty, as oft as the Chriſtian Religion requires.

Which, I ſhall demonſtrate in the next Diſcourſe, is much oftner than men imagine.

The End of the firſt Diſcourſe.

Diſcourſe

Diſcourſe II.

THE FREQUENCY OF Holy Communion.

HAVING demonſtrated in the foregoing Diſcourſe, that it is a duty indiſpenſably lying upon all Chriſtians, to receive the holy Sacrament of Chriſt's Body and Bloud; a duty of great weight and importance; for the neglect of which I do not ſee, how we can atone, by the performance of any other Duty whatſoever; I proceed to ſhow, that it is a duty which ought to be frequently repeated; *for as oft as ye eat this Bread* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *and drink this Cup, ye do ſhow the Lord's Death till he come.* Which plainly inſinuates, that

that they did this *often:* and that it was their Duty ſo to do, ſhall be the ſubject of this preſent Diſcourſe.

And here now, in the very entrance of it, I muſt acknowledge, that we are not told either in this place of Scripture, or any other, *how often* we ought to Communicate, or how frequently the Church ought to make this Commemoration of Chriſt's Death and Paſſion for our ſake.

Of which acknowledged obſervation men now make a very bad and prepoſterous uſe. For finding that our Lord hath only ſaid, *This do, in remembrance of me*, but no where ſaid, *When, at what time*, or times, it is to be done, they imagine that they ſatisfie his will, if they do not wholly withdraw themſelves from his Table, though they come never ſo ſeldom thither.

And truly, by this ſort of reaſoning, that becauſe we are no where told how often we ſhould *do this*, we need only take care to do it ſometime or other; it may be thought ſufficient, if we do it but once in our whole life. And ſo dangerous are ſuch conceits, which men frame to themſelves from ſuch Obſervations,

vations, that vaſt numbers (though otherwiſe not wicked) live in a conſtant neglect of this Duty, till they come to die: and then, upon their Death-Beds calling for this Sacrament and receiving it, they think they have fulfilled the will of our Lord, in *doing this*, as he hath commanded; becauſe, though he hath commanded it to be done, he hath no where commanded *when*, or *how oft* it ſhould be done.

From whence we may certainly conclude, that this is a falſe conſequence, which men draw from the ſilence of the holy Scriptures in this matter: becauſe it is ſo dangerous and pernicious, that, in a manner, it quite deſtroys our Religion, by taking away this part of it, which is the principal; and making it unneceſſary as long as a man lives, ſo he be but ſure to receive when he is at the point of Death.

Of that indeed no man can be aſſured: but ſuppoſing he doth receive the Communion at the very laſt gaſp, he is thus far ſafe and not guilty of the breach of this Commandment, if this conſequence be true: That becauſe our Saviour hath no where appointed the time, or ſaid

ſaid how frequently we ſhould *do this in remembrance of him*, we do comply with his Inſtitution, provided we do it ſometime or other.

Now to deſtroy this falſe notion, from whence ſuch abſurdities flow, I ſhall in the *firſt* place ſhow you; That the quite contrary, naturally and neceſſarily follows from this obſervation, of our Saviour's appointing no time, for the performance of that which he required to be done in remembrance of him.

From whence mens wicked hearts draw this concluſion, as I have ſaid, That it may ſuffice to do this now and then, though never ſo ſeldom.

I.

But the true, the genuine, and honeſt concluſion which follows from thence is this: that our Lord having named no fixed ſetled time or times for the performance of this holy action, it is an argument that he deſigned and appointed it as a conſtant, common, and ordinary part of the Chriſtian Service, which he would have performed in his Church at all times.

Let thoſe words of Chriſt, *This do in remem-*

remembrance of me, be well weighed, and there is no man can infer leſs from thence, than that if he had intended this ſhould be done only at ſome ſuch great and ſolemn times, as the *Paſſover* was among the Jews (when he firſt inſtituted this Feaſt, and eat it with his Diſciples) he would not have ſuffered us to be ignorant of his meaning, but told us in plain terms, that upon ſome certain days, and at ſome extraordinary Aſſemblies, this ſhould not be forgotten. But that he having named no time whatſoever, we ought to look upon his words, as inſtituting this holy action to be a part of that Worſhip, Honour and Service, which he expected from his people in all their Religious Aſſemblies.

For being ordained *in remembrance of him*, it is moſt reaſonable to think he intended this *Commemoration* ſhould be as conſtantly made, as they met together to acknowledge him for their Lord and Saviour, and only Mediator with God the Father.

And being a *Commemoration* ordained inſtead of all the Sacrifices, whereby, under the Law, they daily implored the mercies of God, or gave thanks for them;

them; it ought, in all Conſcience, to be as *continual* a rite of Religious Worſhip as thoſe Sacrifices were.

And thus, when men had upright hearts, and unbiaſſed affections, they did honeſtly underſtand our Saviour's meaning; and accordingly made this a conſtant part of their Divine Service: Which is the next thing I would deſire you to obſerve. For I would not have you to rely meerly on my reaſonings and inferences; (though I verily think this would appear a true way of arguing, and a right concluſion unto any unprejudiced mind, if we had no more to juſtifie it) but as a further evidence of this, nay, as a full conviction that we ought ſo to take it, I beſeech you ſeriouſly to conſider, that

II.

Thus the Apoſtles and the firſt Chriſtians underſtood the meaning of our bleſſed Saviour in this Inſtitution. And can we have any better Expoſitors of his words, any ſurer directors of our practice, than ſuch great Servants of his, who were filled with the Holy Ghoſt? who never met together to worſhip God, and

and our Saviour, but this was a part, and a principal part too, of the ſervice they performed in thoſe Aſſemblies. If I can make this good, the other will follow: for there can no other account be given, why they did this as conſtantly as they aſſembled themſelves for Divine Service, but becauſe they took that to be our Saviour's meaning and intention, when he ſaid, *This do, in remembrance of me.*

Now there is nothing more apparent in the holy ſtory, than this, that *the Apoſtles, and thoſe whom they firſt converted, made this a daily part of the offices of Religion.* For we read that when three thouſand Souls joyned themſelves to the Church upon the day of Pentecoſt, *they continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles Doctrine, and fellowſhip, and breaking of Bread, and Prayers*, Acts ii. 42. Where *breaking of Bread*, I proved before, ſignifies their receiving the Euchariſt; and now obſerve, that the words we tranſlate *continued ſtedfaſtly* (which in the Greek are ἦσαν προσκαρτεροῦντες) ſignifie, that they were *conſtant* and *aſſiduous* in this holy action. For the word imports frequency, as appears from other places; particularly from

Rom.

Rom. xii. 12. Where there is the ſame word in the Apoſtles Command for Prayer; and we tranſlate it, *continuing inſtant in Prayer*. And *Coloſſ.* iv. 2. it is joyned with *watching thereunto with thanksgiving*. From which Obſervations we gain this; that as frequent and inſtant as they were in Prayer, ſo frequent and inſtant they were in breaking of Bread: for they were προσκαρτερῦντες, conſtant and unwearied in them, both alike.

Now what this conſtancy or frequency was, is expounded in the 46. *verſe*: where S. *Luke* ſaith, *they continued* (the ſame word again) *daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking Bread from houſe to houſe*, or *at home*; as the word is better tranſlated in the Margin of our Bibles. Where we ſee that *breaking of Bread at home*, in their own private Houſes, was as *daily*, as their going to the *Temple* publickly: and can be meant of nothing, but their receiving the holy Communion *every day*. For no man can ſo much as imagine a reaſon, why breaking of Bread ſhould be mentioned as their daily practice at home, together with their reſort to the Temple-ſervice abroad;

abroad; but to ſignifie that they communicated among themſelves, in the ſervice of the Euchariſt or Holy Communion, proper to the Faith of Chriſtians; as they Communicated with the Jews in the ſervice of the Temple, common to all the Diſciples of *Moſes*.

You may impute this, it is poſſible, to the warmth of their zeal: but remember withal, that this zeal was grounded upon knowledge; which they wanted not in thoſe days. And the knowledge they had of Chriſtian Religion taught them; that when our bleſſed Saviour commanded them to do this, in remembrance of him, naming no time when it ſhould be done, he meant it ſhould be done always in their Chriſtian Aſſemblies: as the perfection and Crown of that Service, for which they aſſembled.

III.

And indeed, if we had not had theſe records of the practice of the Apoſtles, and of the firſt Chriſtians, to explain the meaning of our Saviour's Inſtitution; yet we ſhould have had reaſon to think it was ſo in the Apoſtles days (and there-

therefore the meaning of our Saviour) becauſe this practice of receiving the holy Communion every day, continued in the Church for ſome Ages. I cannot ſay, in every place (for we have no Records of that, but rather of the contrary) but in many places, and in the moſt famous that are come to our notice; and where the vigour of Chriſtian Religion remained; and where they were awakened, by more than ordinary dangers, to conſider their obligation.

Thus we find S. *Cyprian* in his Expoſition of the Lord's Prayer, takes that Petition, *give us this day our daily Bread*; to ſignifie, in the *ſpiritual* ſence, our deſire to be fit to *receive the Euchariſt every day, for the food of Salvation.* And in his Epiſtle to the Church of *Thibaris*, ſpeaking of a more grievous and fiercer fight of perſecution hanging then over their heads, he tells them, therefore the Souldiers of Jeſus Chriſt ought to fortifie and arm themſelves well againſt it, with an uncorrupt Faith, and robuſt Vertue; conſidering that they did for this end *quotidie calicem Chriſti ſanguinis bibere*, &c. *every day drink the Cup of Chriſt's Bloud, that they might alſo be*

able

able to ſhed their own bloud for Chriſt's ſake. In which words he addreſſes his Diſcourſe to the *Laicks*, as well as the *Clergie:* exhorting all the faithful unto the conſtancy of Martyrdom; which Men, Women and Children indured.

Nay, long after this, we learn from S. *Hierom* (in his Apology to *Pammachius* for his Books againſt *Jovinian*, and other places) that this Cuſtom continued at *Rome*, and in *Spain*; as well as in *Africk:* where S. *Auſtin* tells us (in his famous Epiſtle to *Januarius*) that in his time, ſome did *quotidie communicare*, &c. *daily communicate of the body and bloud of our Lord*; though others, he acknowledges, did it only on certain days. S. *Baſil* alſo begins his Epiſtle to *Cæſaria Patritia* in this manner; *to communicate every day, and partake of the holy body and bloud of our Lord Chriſt,* καλὸν καὶ ὠφελὶς, *is a commendable and profitable thing:* and then adds, that they did communicate *four times* a Week in his Church, on *the Lord's day, Wedneſday, Friday,* and the *Sabbath,* that is *Saturday*; *and on other days, if the memory of any Martyr fell upon them.*

Nay, three or four Ages more after this, ſuch a ſenſe of this Devotion remained, that *Walafridus Strabo* (in his Book of Eccleſiaſtical Affairs, *c.* 20.) ſays, *it ſeems to be very full of reaſon, that Chriſtians, eſpecially Clergie-men, ſhould every day be imployed in divine Offices; and, when ſome very grievous ſpot of mind or body doth not hinder, receive the Lord's Bread and Bloud, without which we cannot live: imitating the wholſome diligence of the primitive Church; concerning whom we read in the Acts of the Apoſtles, that they perſevered in the Apoſtles Doctrine and fellowſhip, and in breaking of Bread and Prayers: and a little after, they continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking Bread from Houſe to Houſe, &c.* quoting the words I named before.

All which, and much more that might be ſaid, make it apparent, that the Church in the beſt times, and the beſt men in the Church, in after Ages, lookt upon this as an ordinary part of Chriſtian Worſhip: which Chriſt intended ſhould be performed in his Church, as oft as they aſſembled for Divine Service. And what other ground could they have for

for it, but this; that Chriſt having confined it to no time, they thought, in reaſon, it ſhould be taken for a duty he expected from them at all times, when they came to worſhip him, and make their thankful acknowledgment unto him?

IV.

And truly, we can gather no leſs from the very nature of this holy action; which ſufficiently ſhows it was our Saviour's meaning, that it ſhould be a daily part of the Churches Service. It being, as all know, a ſolemn Thankſgiving unto God, and a Form of Prayer and Petitioning (which every one confeſſes are acts of Worſhip to be conſtantly performed) and alſo a commemoration of that upon which the efficacy of all our Prayers and Thankſgivings depends, *viz.* the Sacrifice of Chriſt upon the Croſs: which is here likewiſe repreſented unto God, as that which appearing always before him in the Heavens, intercedes for us, and makes all our Sacrifices acceptable to his Majeſty.

And beſides all this, is the peculiar worſhip which the Church gives unto Chriſt, as a grateful acknowledgment

of his unparallel'd love, in laying down his life for us, to purchaſe the moſt ineſtimable benefits; which he herein alſo aſſures unto us, and beſtows upon us. Which is in part declared in theſe words, upon which I have built my Diſcourſe, wherein we are told the end of this holy Sacrament is, to *ſhow* or *publiſh the Lord's Death:* that is, *ſhow it with praiſe*; predicate, extol, and magnifie (as the word καταγγέλλειν imports) proclaim with our higheſt praiſes, the loving kindneſs of the Lord, in the glorious work of our Redemption, through his moſt precious bloud. But is more fully declared in the very words of the Inſtitution, when he ſaid, *Do this in remembrance of us:* which ſhow, that our doing this, is the peculiar honour, we do our bleſſed Lord; by making a publick commemoration that he took our nature upon him, that he died for us, that he obtained thereby a glorious Victory over all our Enemies; that he purchaſed for himſelf and for us immortal glory; and is now at God's right hand, in full power to beſtow it upon us. In memory of all theſe things, ſaith our Saviour, *do this*; that when I am dead,

I may

I may always live in your hearts; and the knowledge of all theſe things, may go down to all poſterity; and be commemorated from one Generation unto another for ever, with thankful praiſes: but eſpecially the memory of my *Death* may be tranſmitted to them; and be celebrated with continual acknowledgments.

For it was but fit that he ſhould be publickly honoured in that, which when he ſuffered, expoſed him to the greateſt contempt. And no doubt it was the deſign of God in appointing this Rite of holy worſhip, to have his Death commemorated with Everlaſting praiſes, which, for the preſent, had brought him into the utmoſt diſgrace. To which purpoſe is that paſſage, in an *Eaſter* Sermon, aſcribed to *Cæſarius* Biſhop of *Arles*: "Becauſe he intended to remove "out of our ſight the body which he had "taken, and to place it in Heaven; it "was neceſſary that in the ſame day, he "ſhould conſecrate for us the Sacrament "of his Body and Bloud, *to the end, "that we ſhould honour by the type, that "which had been once offered for the price "of our Salvation.*

In ſhort this is the proper worſhip of *God Incarnate*, and of our *Crucified Saviour:* and therefore cannot be thought by wiſe conſiderers, to have been intended to be left unto uncertainty, whether we would perform it or no, or when we would be pleaſed to perform it; but to have been ordained as a daily Service, which ſhould be continually performed unto Chriſt.

Which, in truth, the continual neceſſities of the Church require: it being the principal Act whereby we have Communion with Chriſt; and partake of the Sacrifice he made on the Croſs. We are united unto him, as Members of his Body, in the other Sacrament of Baptiſm; wherein alſo his holy Spirit is beſtowed upon us, as a principle of life and motion ſuitable to our Religion: which directs us unto this Sacrament, as the chief outward viſible means of preſerving our Union with Chriſt, by having conſtant Communion with him, and with his holy ſpirit. Whoſe influences he here communicates unto us, for our growth and increaſe in ſpiritual life and holineſs: and we therefore, in reaſon, ſhould be deſirous conſtantly to receive,

ceive, becauſe we conſtantly want them; and are too apt to ſtart aſide from him, unto whom we ought to keep our ſelves ſtedfaſtly united, by Faith, and Love, and uniform univerſal Obedience.

Put now all this together, That it is an act of holy worſhip; a worſhip altogether as peculiar to the Church, as the Sacrifice on the Croſs is peculiar to Chriſtianity; the only worſhip wherewith we honour our bleſſed Lord and Saviour; a Commemoration, nay, a repreſentation of that which makes all our Services acceptable unto God; and the principal way and means whereby we have Communion with Chriſt, from whom we ſtand in continual need of the Communication of his grace: and we ſhall ſoon be ſatisfied, that the plaineſt, and moſt reaſonable anſwer that can be given to thoſe, who ask, how often did Chriſt intend we ſhould eat of this Bread and drink of this Cup, is this; as often as we aſſemble publickly to worſhip God our Saviour. For there is no worſhip peculiar to him but this; nor is there any, wherein we have ſuch Communion with him, as in this: by which we do truly and indeed participate of the Sa-

crifice offered unto God upon the Croſs, as the Jews and the Gentiles did of their Sacrifices offered up on their Altars.

Thus the Apoſtle diſcourſes at large in the Chapter before my Text, 1 *Cor.* x. 16, 17, *&c.* where he takes it for an undeniable truth, that Chriſtians do communicate with God their Saviour, in the merits of his Death, by receiving the holy Euchariſt. And thence proves it to be unlawful for them to partake of the Gentile Sacrifices; by proving, that to eat of their Sacrifices was to be acceſſory to their Idolatries: as the Jews by eating of ſuch Sacrifices as were offered among them, *did partake of the Altar* (or did communicate with the Altar) that is, Communicate with God, whoſe Altar that was upon which the Sacrifices were conſumed. Which evidently ſuppoſes that Chriſtians alſo did in the Euchariſt, partake of a Sacrifice, and were thereby joyned to Chriſt, who was that Sacrifice. Which though carried by him into the moſt holy place of the Heavens, there to be preſented unto God, is no leſs participated by Chriſtians, in this holy Feaſt of the

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Euchariſt, than the Jews did participate of their offerings of thankſgiving on the Altar.

I know very well, it will be objected, that by underſtanding our Saviour's meaning in this Inſtitution after this manner, we prove a great deal too much; and argue our publick ſervice to be defective, when it wants this peculiar worſhip of Chriſt, which he ordained.

To which I ſhall only ſay this, That if by diſcourſing thus, we prove no more than is true; our worſhip muſt be confeſſed to be but imperfect, when the Holy Communion is wanting: not ſo perfect, at leaſt, as that of the ancient Chriſtians was. Which we had much better honeſtly acknowledge, and beſeech God to accept for Chriſt's ſake, of ſuch ſervices as we do perform, though, in ſome regard, and in compariſon, imperfect ones; than, by going about to defend untruths and eſtabliſh falſe notions in Religion, to make our ſelves more guilty before God.

I know alſo it will be urged againſt what I have ſaid; that ſurely it is ſufficient, if we every day pray to God in Chriſt's name, and for his ſake deſire our

Prayers may find a gracious Audience; praiſing him alſo, as our Saviour and Redeemer and Interceſſor at God's right hand: though we do not uſe theſe viſible ſigns, which he hath appointed.

But, if this be intirely ſufficient, ſo that our Chriſtian worſhip may be juſtly thought intire, compleat, and perfect, without *doing this in remembrance of Chriſt*: then for what end was it inſtituted by him? Why did he appoint it, if our worſhip be compleat without it? Then it is as needleſs and ſuperfluous an addition to the Chriſtian Service, as we ſeem now, by our intire neglect of it or ſeldom performance, to imagine it to be.

Which, ſince no Chriſtian dare ſay, becauſe it diſparages the wiſdom of our Saviour in appointing it, if all be perfect without it; we muſt therefore, to our ſhame, take the other courſe, and ſay; that we are faln into a ſtate of imperfection, but hope our leſs perfect ſervices will be accepted, by vertue of that moſt perfect Sacrifice of Chriſt, which we commemorate publickly, as oft as we are able.

V. And

V.

And that might very well be oftner, than we do commemorate it; for I ſhall now proceed to tell you (as an Introduction to the account I am about to give, how the Service of the Church came to be ſo defective) that when Chriſtian people grew leſs devout, yet ſtill they did not fail to perform this peculiar ſervice to Chriſt, every *Lord's Day*, and *Holy Day*, at the leaſt: that is, on thoſe days of the Week, as you heard out of S. *Baſil*, when the memory of any Martyr was celebrated. Which in time becoming the practice of many Churches, made an ancient Writer about Divine Offices (mentioned by *Caſſander* in his Book of *Liturgies*) affirm, that men imployed in ſecular buſineſſes, received the Communion, even in the primitive times, only on the Lord's Days and other Feſtivals: interpreting, as many think, the practice of the moſt ancient times, by the Cuſtoms of his own.

It is poſſible indeed that he had a better reaſon for what he affirmed; becauſe we find ſomething in Scripture to countenance this opinion, that very early

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ly *ſome Chriſtians* did content themſelves with ſo doing. For in *Acts* xx. 7. we read, that at *Troas upon the firſt day of the week, when the Diſciples came together to break Bread* (i.e. to receive the Euchariſt) Paul *preached unto them*, &c. From whence it ſhould ſeem (ſaith our learned Mr. *Thorndike*) that in this Church at *Troas* the Euchariſt was celebrated, even in the times of the Apoſtles, not every day as it was at *Jeruſalem*, but only on the Lord's Day.

For the firſt day of the Week being mentioned as the time, when they came together to break Bread, it ſeems, ſaith he, to ſtand againſt the reſt in terms of difference; as if upon other days they did it not.

And thus much I believe is certain, that when the Church was multiplied, all Chriſtians could not meet together every day: but ſome one day, ſome another; and all on the Lord's Day. Which being the principal day, it came to paſs in proceſs of time, that it was the only day of the Week when they celebrated the Euchariſt: but on that day none omitted it, no more than they did the reſt of the Chriſtian Service. And thus,

thus, it ſeems to me moſt reaſonable to underſtand the matter here at *Troas:* where they did not omit the Communion on other days (for I cannot perſwade my ſelf, but that they were conformable to the Mother Church of *Jeruſalem*) but ſuch as could aſſemble themſelves, and attend upon Divine Service daily, did receive it; and on the Lord's Day all the Chriſtians in the City came together for that purpoſe; and whatſoever buſineſs they had, which hindered them on other days, it did not hinder them on this: but they all came to do their duty to their Saviour, and make a publick Commemoration of his love.

And in this they were ſo ſtrict for a long time, and it was accounted ſo great a fault to be abſent, that if any perſons were found not to have Communicated for *three* Sundays together, they were to be Excommunicated, and ſeparated from the Society of the Church, by the *Canons* of *three* ſeveral *Synods* mentioned by *Zonaras* upon the eleventh Canon of the Apoſtles: which orders them to be caſt out, *as an offence to the Church*, who entred into the Church and heard the holy Scriptures, but did not ſtay for

for the Prayers, nor receive the Holy Communion. Which was thought ſo neceſſary, that the Deacon who before the Communion (as you ſhall hear anon out of S. *Chryſoſtom*) cried, *All you who are under penance, you who cannot pray* (*i.e.* with the faithful) *go out*; is appointed by the *Conſtitutions* called Apoſtolical, to ſtand with the Sub-Deacon, at the Door of the Church, and hinder all the reſt, who were not under Penance (and ſo bound to Communicate) *that they ſhould not go out till they had received the holy Sacrament.*

And unto this pitch of perfection, if not higher, our firſt Reformers deſired to bring the Service of the Church. I ſay, *if not higher*, becauſe in the firſt Communion Book of *Edward* VI. there is a Rubrick which ſuppoſeth *daily Communion*, not only in *Cathedrals* but in *other places*: as there is another which takes care the people ſhould be admoniſhed and quickned; when they are negligent, to come to the Communion *upon the Sunday, or Holy Day.* Which ſhows (as the learned perſon above mentioned obſerves) that they affected the frequentation of this Service, according

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to the primitive pattern; ſo far as they thought it attainable: deſiring that even upon other Holy Days, as well as Sundays, it ſhould be celebrated; in the Mother Churches, at leaſt, as patterns and examples unto the reſt. And thus much Mr. *Calvin* himſelf roundly declares (after he had commended the ancient cuſtom of communicating daily, and condemned the cuſtom of communicating only once a Year, as a Diabolical invention) that the Table of the Lord ought to be prepared for Chriſtian people, at leaſt, once a Week: and that all ſhould be exhorted and ſtimulated (and the ſlothful chidden) to flock, as hungry people, unto ſuch a Banquet: As his words are in his IV. Book of *Inſtitutions C.* xvii. *n.* 46.

And ſo it is ſtill enjoyned, in one of our *Rubricks*, that *in Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, and Colledges, where there are many Prieſts and Deacons, they ſhall receive the Communion every Sunday, at leaſt, except they have a reaſonable cauſe to the contrary.* Now nothing, you have heard, was thought a reaſonable cauſe in ancient time to keep any of the people from the Communion, except

cept ſuch ſins as threw them into the number of the *Penitents:* For none of the reſt were ſuffered to go out of the Church, but ſtay'd to receive it. Nay, ſuch was the devout affection of the primitive Chriſtians, while they remained one heart, and one Soul, that they never celebrated the Communion (as we learn from *Juſtin Martyr* his firſt Apology) but they ſent it to thoſe Believers who were abſent (particularly to thoſe whoſe bodily infirmities kept them from the publick Aſſemblies) that they might have Communion with the Church; and it might appear, by their partaking of the ſame Bread, that they were one Body, with thoſe who were preſent.

And here let me briefly tell you, that this *Rubrick* or Rule, ought in reaſon to be the rather obſerved (as it will hereafter in this and other Cathedrals) that the people who live near, or come, upon occaſion, thither, may have frequent opportunity to Communicate with the Mother Church. Where anciently Chriſtians were very deſirous to receive this holy Sacrament, as oft as they could; that they might teſtifie there

there was but *Unum Altare*, one Altar, as they called it, one Chriſtian Society and Communion; unto which they all belonged, and with whom they were in Union: Particular Pariſhes in the Dioceſs, being not diſtinct Churches, but parts and Members of one Church, which is the Mother Church, from whence they all, in ancient time, did originally ſpring.

For ſo we find in the Monuments of the Church, that a Biſhop and his Clergy having made Converſions in ſome conſiderable part of a Country, there they ſeated themſelves, and from thence ſpread the Goſpel into neighbour places; who all lookt upon themſelves afterward, as depending upon that one prime place, as a ſtream upon a Fountain: which they owned by communicating there, with the Biſhop and his Clergy, as oft as it was poſſible for them ſo to do.

Thus it is apparent, by the Hiſtory of the *Acts of the holy Apoſtles*, that the very firſt Preachers of Religion began in Cities; and afterward carrying the glad tidings of the Goſpel into the adjacent Towns and Villages; thoſe Towns and Villages lookt upon themſelves as but one

one Church with that City, and thither repaired, as oft as they could, to teſtifie their unity therewith. Eſpecially at the *high Feſtivals:* when anciently there was ſuch a multitude came to receive, that in ſome places the Church could not contain them. So we learn from a Letter of *Leo* the firſt, Biſhop of *Rome*, to *Dioſcorus* Biſhop of *Alexandria*, in the Fifth Century: where he adviſes him, that when any great Feſtival makes the Aſſembly more numerous, and there meets together ſo great a Company of Believers, that one Church cannot contain them, there is no queſtion but the *oblation of the Sacrifice muſt be renewed; when the firſt company is gone, and the Church is filled again with the preſence of a new Aſſembly*, Epiſt. 81. And S. *Auſtin* tells us (in the famous Epiſtle before-named) that the *Thurſday* before *Eaſter*, the numbers of the people were ſo great in ſome places, that the Sacrament was celebrated both Morning and Evening: whereas on that day the cuſtom was to celebrate it only in the Evening.

Which as it ſhows the wonderful decay of Devotion among us, in compari-

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ſon with ancient times, ſo reproves that grand error which is now crept in among us, even among well-diſpoſed people, in many ſuch places as this. Where the people imagine, that if they Communicate in the Pariſh Churches of the City where they live; they need take no notice at all of the Cathedral there. No, they rather endeavour, and ſometimes with a factious kind of zeal, to advance the credit of their Pariſh Churches, in oppoſition to that great Church, from which they all flowed, and on which they ſtill depend.

This is quite out of the way of ancient Religion, which taught men to bear the greateſt regard to the Mother Church, where the Principal Paſtor of their Souls was ſeated (and thence called the *Cathedral*) and to deſire with him immediately to communicate, as oft as they had opportunity, or could conveniently.

For to do otherwiſe, was in effect to throw off all reſpect to him, or very much to neglect him and his See; and was lookt upon as the principle and beginning of Schiſm, by breaking the unity of the Church: and in time led men

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to that peſtilent fancy, which now very much prevails; that every Pariſh Church in the Dioceſs is a diſtinct Church; which hath all power within it ſelf.

VI.

We therefore who are *Prieſts* and *Deacons*, placed in a *Cathredral*, ſhould, above all others, be willing, nay deſirous to comply with the Order of our Church, now recited: and not eaſily admit of any cauſe, as a reaſonable excuſe for our forbearance. For, let me further acquaint you, that, after the *people* contented themſelves with receiving every *Sunday*, at leaſt; ſtill the *Prieſts* and the *Deacons*, and ſuch, as were not intangled in ſecular buſineſs, continued the ancient cuſtom of receiving the Communion every day.

This we learn from *Micrologus*, and *Walafridus Strabo* before mentioned, and the old Book of *Divine Offices* in *Caſſander*; and from *Rhegino*, who lived not much above ſeven hundred years ago. In whoſe Book of *Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline*, we find this memorable record; that if any *Prieſt, or Deacon, or Sub-Deacon, or any other of the Clergie, being in a City,*

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or a place where there was a Church, did not come to the daily Sacrifice, he ſhould not any longer be accounted a Clergie-man; if, upon reprehenſion, he did not amend.

And can we think it unreaſonable then to be tied unto leſs? which is, to attend upon this Sacrifice (as it may be truly called, in many reſpects) every Lord's Day, at the leaſt? We ſhould rather think it an honour, and high priviledge, that we may wait upon him ſo oft at his Altar: and look upon our ſelves as bound to do him honour, who hath ſo highly honoured us, by reſtoring this Commemoration of him in his Church, as near, as we can, to its primitive perfection.

VII.

And, as a motive to it, let me now proceed to tell you, that when Chriſtian People grew leſs frequent in receiving the holy Communion; this neglect was attended with a great decay of holineſs and good manners. As when they grew leſs devout, they grew more negligent in this holy duty: ſo this negligence produced great ſloth and careleſneſs, in all the other duties of a Chriſtian Life.

Life. For becoming leſs ſenſible of their obligations to their Lord and Maſter Chriſt, who bad them thus remember him, they became unmindful of the reſt of his Commands; by forgetting this, which was intended for the making of a perpetual Sacrifice of their Souls and Bodies to him. As we may be convinced, by obſerving what a wide difference there is between the firſt Chriſtians, and us in theſe days: that is, between them who had Chriſt continually in their thoughts; and us, who ſeldom remember him.

Then their thoughts were, in a manner wholly imployed, in contriving how to get to Heaven; and now all our thoughts are, how to get as much as we can in this preſent uncertain World. Then they had but one Soul, in the whole body of Chriſtians; and we are ſo many men, ſo many minds. Then they would lay down their lives one for another, now we kill and deſtroy, at leaſt hate and bite, and are ready to devour one another. Then they were for doing all the good they could to others; now we are all for our ſelves, and it is well if we be not contriving miſchief,

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and doing injuries, or ill offices to our Neighbours. Then they feared no dangers; but now we are unwilling to ſuffer any thing. Then they lived in abſolute obedience to the worſt of Governours; but now we are apt to quarrel with juſt Authority, and find fault with every thing that is done by our Prince, and our Superiours.

Unto what can we more probably aſcribe this difference, than to their frequenting and our neglecting of the Holy Communion? In which opinion I am not ſingular, for Dr. *Jackſon*, I remember (ſometime *Dean* of this Church) thought it very likely, *that the Wars of Kingdoms, the Contentions in Families, the infinite multitude of Law-Sutes, the perſonal hatreds, and the univerſal want of Charity, which hath made the World ſo miſerable and ſo wicked, may, in a great degree, be attributed to the neglect of this great Symbol and Inſtrument of Charity.*

Which could not but cloſely knit us together in Brotherly love and affection, if the nature of it were duly conſidered. For that is ſuch, ſaith Mr. *Calvin*, in the place before-named, as ſhows it was not intended to be received once a Year only, but

but to be in frequent uſe among Chriſtians: that in a frequent memory they might repeat the Paſſion of Chriſt; and by that Commemoration ſupport and ſtrengthen their Faith, praiſe the loving kindneſs of God, and cheriſh mutual Charity among themſelves; nay, give a teſtimony of that one to another, whoſe Bond they beheld in the unity of the Body of Chriſt. *For as oft as we communicate of the Symbol of Chriſt's Body, we ſtrictly tye our ſelves mutually one to another (by giving, as it were, and receiving a token and pledge thereof) to perform all the offices of love and kindneſs: ſo that none of us will do any thing, whereby our Brother may receive any harm; nor omit any thing, whereby we may be helpful to him, when his neceſſities require, and our abilities are ſufficient.*

VIII.

And now, in the laſt place, I ſhall further ſhow the great neceſſity of this duty; by repreſenting to you this ſad truth: that as the ſeldom Celebration of the Holy Communion, was attended with a lamentable decay of holy Living; ſo thereby the Chriſtian worſhip it ſelf was

was no leſs wofully corrupted and depraved. For from hence have riſen, I can clearly ſhow, ſundry dangerous corruptions in the *Roman* Church: of which we complain very juſtly; but do not charge upon the right cauſe.

I will mention *three* or *four*.

I. *Firſt*, The Prieſt's communicating alone by himſelf, which in truth is no Communion, aroſe from that groſs negligence, which I am now perſwading you to amend.

The Church of *Rome* hath thus far preſerved a right notion of the holy Communion, as to conceive it to be a part of the daily Service: upon which the people, as you have heard, attended, more or leſs, for ſome Ages. But in proceſs of time, they, growing cold, left only the Prieſts and Deacons to communicate with him that miniſtred: and the Prieſts and Deacons alſo growing remiſs, he was at laſt left alone. Who in ſome places, continued to ſay all the Prayers, and read the *Epiſtle* and *Goſpel*, and all things elſe belonging to this Service, until he came to the Conſecration; and there broke off: but, in other

places, he ventured to proceed further; and consecrated, and received the holy Communion by himself alone. Which last way of proceeding, being found most for the profit of the Priests, it grew to be a custom in the *Roman* Church, for the Priest that officiated, to communicate alone, when there was no Body to receive with him. For if there had been no Communion, there would have been no offerings; and therefore they continued the Communion, though there were none to communicate: nay multiplied private Masses, that there might be as many oblations as ever.

This is one corruption, which hath most certainly sprung from the indevotion of Christian People.

II. Another, as bad or worse, is this; *the giving the holy Communion in a Wafer.*

For the ancient custom being, as we read in *Honorius Augustodunensis*, for the several Families in a Town to bring to the Priest, the flower, with which the *panis Dominicus*, as he calls it, the *Lord's Bread* was made; or else to joyn together to bring a Loaf ready made by a common contribution to it; which was called

called their *oblation*, and the *Hoſt* (being for the repreſentation of our Saviour's Sacrifice on the Croſs) when the Church was increaſed in number, but grew leſs in ſanctity (as his words are) this Loaf dwindled from a great one into a little one, according to the ſmall number of Communicants: till at laſt, there being no Communicants at all, it ſhrunk up into a Wafer; that is, a little thin bit of Bread, in the form of a ſmall piece of money (the people offering ſuch pieces of money in ſtead of Meal) being juſt ſo much as the Prieſt could eat himſelf, when there was no body to receive with him.

This is the Original of *Wafers*; which ſtill retained the name of the *Hoſt*, after it was no longer the offering of the people, nor a repreſentation of Chriſt's Sacrifice: theſe *Wafers* having brought in this corruption, that now there is no *breaking of the Bread*, in repreſentation of the breaking of Chriſt's Body. Though it be expreſly mentioned, in the Inſtitution of this Sacrament, where we read, that Chriſt *took Bread, and brake it*, &c. and is ſo much belonging to the eſſence, as we ſpeak, of the Sacrament,

that the Sacrament took its name from hence; and is called in Scripture, *breaking of Bread.*

Behold here again, what Chriſtian people have done by their indevotion.

Which hath given occaſion to ſuch a conſiderable depravation as this. For S. *Paul* ſpeaking of this part of the Euchariſt, calls it *the bread that we break*, 1 *Cor.* x. 16. and our Lord himſelf explaining the Myſtery of this Bread, ſaith poſitively, *This is my body, which is broken for you*, xi. 24.

Which evidently ſhows, that the Bread ought then to be *broken*, or elſe it cannot be Chriſt's *Body broken* for us: and therefore that this *breaking of the Bread* is not ſuch a ſuperfluous thing, as the Church of *Rome* now makes it (for the Bread is not broken there) but ſuch a part of this Sacrament, as without it, the ſufferings of Chriſt upon the Croſs are not fully repreſented to us.

But thus, as I ſaid, the negligence of Chriſtian People, in not frequenting the Holy Communion, hath maimed this Sacrament. Nay

III. The Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*, in all probability came from the ſame original. For the Prieſt being left alone at the Communion, they found it neceſſary to magnifie what he did there, as much as it was poſſible: that ſo the people might bring their offerings more freely, though they did not receive together with him. And they magnified his operation ſo much, till at laſt it brought forth this prodigious conceit; that he held the very natural Body and Bloud of Chriſt in his hands, after the Conſecration. Which fancy obtained the more eaſily, by the help of the *Wafers* now mentioned: which having neither the form, nor figure of Bread, nor being like any ſort of food, uſed in the World, ſerved to baniſh out of peoples minds, the thoughts of any ſuch thing as Bread, which they received in the Holy Communion.

See here again how men have ſpoiled our moſt excellent Religion, by neglecting the conſtant practice of it. For this Doctrine of tranſubſtantiating the Bread into the very natural Body of Chriſt, is the more abſurd; becauſe in

reality there is not ſo much as true Bread preſented unto the Prieſt to tranſubſtantiate; if ſuch a feat could poſſibly be wrought. For the beſt Chriſtians, after theſe *Wafers* were introduced, lookt upon them as unfit for Conſecration; being unworthy of the name of *Bread*, and not being at all *broken*; and therefore did *ad Chriſtum & Eccleſiam nihil pertinere*, not at all belong to Chriſt or his Church: as *Bernoldus* a Prieſt of *Conſtance* adventured to ſpeak, in the *Eleventh* Century. For he is that ancient Writer, whom *Caſſander* mentions, as the *Expounder of the Roman Order*; and commends, as a pious, prudent perſon, and well skilled in the Eccleſiaſtical Traditions; excepting only the indignation he expreſſed at the reducing of the oblations of Bread for the uſe of the Sacrifice, into this form of *Wafers*, much different from the form of true Bread: which he called therefore in contempt *mites of nummulary oblations* (being in the form of little pieces of money) and aſcribes to them an *imaginary ſhadowy lightneſs*, which deſerve not the name of Bread, they are ſo thin: and inveighs againſt them in more and ſharper

per words than theſe; which *Caſſander* (in his Book of *Liturgicks*, cap. 27.) ſaith, he thought it not expedient to tranſcribe in that place. But what he hath tranſcribed, abundantly ſhows how wiſe and good men reſented this change in the Sacrament; *by reaſon of which the Divine Service, and the Religion of the Eccleſiaſtical office*, as that Author ſpeaks, *was much, every way, confounded.*

IV. *Laſtly*, This very thing hath turned the holy Communion, in that Church, into a propitiatory Sacrifice, offered up to God both for the quick and the dead. Which hath proved a moſt horrible abuſe, having no other original than that now named: the peoples not communicating, but leaving the Prieſt alone at the Altar. Who, being loth to loſe the oblations, as well as the peoples Company, began to ſpeak very high things of the ſaving efficacy, which from this action of the Prieſt alone, redounded even unto thoſe who did not Communicate with him.

Which opinion being once received, as a popular conceit, men gave money

freely and abundantly for private Maſſes; out of a perſwaſion, that thereby they ſhould procure remiſſion of ſins, both for themſelves and for others; both for thoſe alive, and thoſe who were dead.

By which things I hope you ſee the great miſchief of neglecting the holy Communion; which hath even undone the Chriſtian World: for it hath ſpoil'd Chriſt's holy Religion, and turned it into quite another thing; by moſt groſs depravations of it.

Which have had this effect, even upon us, who are called *Reformed*; that they have rooted out the principal part of God's Service from among us, and made it lame and imperfect. For the Church of *Rome*, having retained the cuſtom of celebrating the Communion every day, but turned it into a Sacrifice for the quick and the dead, though none but the Prieſt partake of it; this is the uſe which the Enemy of Mankind hath tempted us to make of their abuſes: to perſwade our ſelves that ſo long as private Maſſes are aboliſhed, we need not trouble our ſelves to be frequent in the Celebration and Communion of the Euchariſt.

Now

Now this is even according to the hearts deſire of our grand Adverſary the Devil; who can be content with ſuch a Reformation as this, while we retain the very root and foundation of all the abuſes which we have reformed: *viz.* Negligence in frequenting this Holy Sacrament. Which I hope we ſhall be careful alſo to reform at laſt; if men will but lay to heart, ſuch things as I have laid before their Eyes.

Which let us ſee, that though the particular time of communicating be not named in Chriſt's Inſtitution, yet that is no argument, we may take our own time for it, and do not offend God ſo it be done ſome time or other: but quite contrary, that our Lord intended it ſhould be performed at all times, when we aſſemble for Divine Service. Thus the firſt and beſt Chriſtians underſtood it; thus they practiſed, and tranſmitted this practice unto Poſterity, who for ſome Ages continued it; and though it be not continued till theſe times, yet we are forced to acknowledge, that the remembrance it importeth (as that excellent man Mr. *Thorndike* ſpeaks) is ſo proper, ſo peculiar to

the profeſſion we make, that *our Aſſemblies never look ſo like the Aſſemblies of Chriſtians, as when it is celebrated:* But are really naked without it; or, at leaſt, want the Crown of that Service for which we aſſemble; that moſt excellent piece of Service, which is peculiarly appropriated to the worſhip of our bleſſed Lord and Saviour. By the neglect of which, the love of God and the love of one another is deplorably decayed; and the Chriſtian Religion alſo ſo depraved, that they who reformed it in many things, have not been able to reſtore it to its integrity.

And therefore now that God hath put it into the heart of our pious *Metropolitan*, to call upon us and enjoyn us, to live more ſtrictly according to the Rules and Orders of our Religion, by celebrating the holy Communion at all our more ſolemn Aſſemblies; I hope none of us will be any longer diſobedient and refractory to ſo godly a motion: but rather forward to comply with the Command of God, and of our Governours.

It may not be in the power of man perhaps, ſo to command the occaſions of this World, as that all ſhould be always

ways diſpoſed to communicate; yet in ſo great a number as here come together to worſhip God, there cannot but always ſome perſons or other be found, who are not ſo encumbred, but they may be fit, if they pleaſe, to receive the holy Communion with us. Certain I am it ought ſo to be; and what ought to be, may be, and will be, if the reaſon upon which it depends be duly conſidered. If it be not, ſo that for want of perſons diſpoſed to communicate, the holy Sacrament of Chriſt's Body and Bloud, cannot be celebrated every *Sunday*; it is a wilful neglect, for which nothing can be alledged, but too much love of this World: which ariſes from too little a ſenſe of the love of our bleſſed Saviour, and too ſmall valuation of his ineſtimable benefits.

Which I beſeech you, let us awaken our minds to weigh and ponder; and then we ſhall make it part of our buſineſs, to contrive our affairs in this World, in ſuch a manner, that there never want ſome Company at the Holy Communion. And it is no hard matter ſo to order things, that ſome receiving one Sunday, ſome another; all may receive, at leaſt, once a Month. What

What ſhould hinder, if we have any mind to it, and will ſet our ſelves about it? what can ſtand in the way of ſuch a bleſſed, and comfortable Reformation as this? Of which though we have not heard a word from the great pretenders to Religion, in an Age wherein ſo much hath been talkt of the Reformation of the Church; yet all the true Children of it, who underſtand and ſeek its good, are ſenſible, that the continual celebration of the Euchariſt, and the Diſcipline of penance to preſerve the people in a diſpoſition fit to receive it, *are ſuch points of reformation in the Church* (as the great man before-named expreſſes it) *that without reſtoring theſe, all the reſt is but meer noiſe and pretence; if not miſchief.*

And theſe are the things at which the Order of our Church aims, for as it earneſtly ſighs and groans (as you read in the *Commination*) towards the reſtoring of publick penance (which is the only means eſtabliſhed by the Apoſtles, to maintain the Church in condition to communicate continually) ſo it enjoyns, as you have heard, the continual celebration of the Euchariſt, *in Cathedral*,

dral, and Collegiate Churches, and Colledges, every Sunday at the leaſt: which ſuppoſes it would be ſtill more agreeable to its deſires, if it were done alſo upon other Feſtivals.

Now what ſhould hinder us, I ask again, from coming thus near to the primitive Devotion, though we do not come up quite to the utmoſt perfection of it? Unleſs it be the fancy which works in many minds, that to Communicate three times in the Year (as the Church injoyns every Pariſhioner, *at the leaſt*, to do) is ſufficient for any Chriſtian. Which may well be called a fancy; ſince it is manifeſt, the Church names *three times in a Year*, as the very loweſt degree of Devotion, leſs than which it would account profaneneſs: and I have demonſtrated, that we have little or nothing to ſay for our Communicating ſo ſeldom as once a Month; but only this, that in moſt places it is no oftner adminiſtred.

In the Mother Churches it will hereafter be more frequently: which will, in ſome meaſure, conform us to thoſe ancient Churches which communicated every *Sunday*. For all the Country Churches in

in the *Dioceſs*, being but parts of the Mother Church; it may be truly ſaid, the holy Sacrament of Chriſt's Body and Bloud, is adminiſtred once a Week, in all our Churches.

Where I beſeech you let us never want a competent number of Communicants: And, that we may not, do not any longer imagine that you ſhow ſufficient reſpect to our Saviour, if you reſolve to come thrice a Year. I wiſh every one were careful of doing ſo much; but, let me further tell you, they that ſet themſelves ſuch a ſtint, will be in danger too oft to fall ſhort of that: And therefore it is far ſafer, and more becoming to aim at, and endeavour after higher attainments; by coming more frequently to the Table of the Lord.

Hear how ſharply that great perſon, S. *Chryſoſtom*, inveighs againſt thoſe, that contented themſelves with receiving only at the *Feſtivals*, eſpecially at *Eaſter*. It is in his *third* Sermon upon the Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*: where having expounded the laſt words of the firſt Chapter, which repreſent our bleſſed Lord as the *Head of the Church, advanced far above all principalities and powers*,

powers, &c. he thus begins his Sermon.

"Let us reverence our Head; let us "think with our ſelves of what Head "we are the Body: a Head, to which "all things are ſubject: what an honour "is this, to be, in ſome ſort, *viz.* in "our Head, advanced above the An-"gels and the Archangels? Let us re-"verence then this kindred, this affini-"ty, which we have with Chriſt our "Head. Let us fear, leſt any of us be "cut off from this Body; leſt any of us "fall away; leſt we appear unworthy of "our relation to him.

"If any body had ſet a Diadem, or a "Crown of Gold upon our Head, would "we not have laboured by all means, "not to appear unworthy of thoſe live-"leſs ſtones? And yet, now that there "is not ſo little as a Diadem put upon "our Head, but Chriſt himſelf, which "is infinitely more, is become our Head, "we make no account at all of it. The "Angels reverence it, the Archangels "and all the Heavenly Powers do him "honour: we only who are his Body, "neither for this reaſon, nor for the "other, have any conſiderable regard to "him. "What

"What hope then is there of our Sal-
"vation? Think upon that Royal
"Throne; think upon that exceeding
"great honour God hath conferred upon
"thee: and it will be more powerful
"than Hell fire it ſelf, to affright thee
"into a due regard towards him?

With a great many more ſuch like efficacious words (which I do but abridge) he preſſes his people to the greateſt purity of life: and then, at laſt, comes in particular, to preſs them from this Argument to a religious care of receiving the holy Communion.

"I ſee, ſaith he, many of you re-
"ceive the Body of Chriſt, but it is ra-
"ther from cuſtom, and for order ſake,
"than out of reaſon and underſtanding.
"If it were the holy time of *Lent*, ſaith
"one, or if it were the *Epiphany*
"(that is *Chriſtmas*-Day) ſaith ano-
"ther; who would not prepare him-
"ſelf to partake of the Holy Myſte-
"ries? Is it then *Chriſtmas*, is it the
"time of *Lent*, that makes a man a
"worthy Receiver? I thought it had
"been ſincerity of Soul, holineſs and
"purity of Life. With theſe come al-
"ways: without theſe thou haſt no
"right

"right to come at all. *For as oft as you "do this, you ſhow the Lord's Death* "(quoting my Text) that is, you make "a Commemoration of the Salvation "wrought for you, and of the benefit "Chriſt beſtowed upon you.

"Conſider then, how abſtemious, "how careful were they, who did par- "take of the old Sacrifices, under the "Law. What did they not do? What "expence were they not willing to "make? They were always purifying "themſelves, that they might partake "of the Altar. But thou, coming to a "Sacrifice, at which the Angels are "aſtoniſhed, circumſcribeſt the buſi- "neſs, and confineſt it to certain peri- "ods of time (thou wilt receive it at "*Eaſter*, at *Chriſtmas*; then thou wilt "be pure and clean to partake of it.) "But how wilt thou appear before the "Tribunal of the Lord *Jeſus*, who da- "reſt with impure hands and lips to "touch his Body? For ſo it is: at other "times you will not come, no not "though you be pure; but at *Eaſter* you "will needs come, though you have "lately perhaps been bold to commit "ſome great tranſgreſſion.

"O

"O the power of Cuſtom! or rather, "O the power of Preſumption! The "daily Sacrifice is in vain; we ſtand at "the Altar to no purpoſe; there is no "body to partake with us: but then "(at *Eaſter*) abundance of Company by "all means will croud in upon us; "though as unworthy as at any other "time.

"I do not ſpeak this, that you ſhould "receive without any more ado; but "that you would prepare your ſelves "to receive worthily, oftner than you "do: conſidering, if thou art unwor-"thy of the Sacrifice, if thou art unwor-"thy to partake; how art thou worthy "to pray with us?

"Thou heareſt the publick Officer, "making Proclamation, *All ye that are* "*under penance depart.* They then that "do not partake are under penance. If "thou art one of thoſe, thou oughteſt "not to partake: for he that partaketh "not, is in the number of the Penitents. "To what purpoſe doth he proclaim, "*depart, all ye that cannot pray?* (*viz.* "with the faithful) and yet thou im-"pudently ſtayeſt, and doſt not de-"part?

"But

"But thou art none of thoſe, and "therefore thou doſt not depart. That "is, thou art in the number of thoſe "that may receive, and art invited to "it; and yet thou regardeſt it not, thou "makeſt no account of this matter.

"Mind, I beſeech you. There is a "Royal Table ſpread; the Angels mi-"niſter there; the King himſelf is pre-"ſent; and thou ſtandeſt gaping care-"leſly; refuſing to partake with him. "What a ſhame is this! Doſt thou ap-"pear there in filthy Garments, and "art nothing concerned about it? No, "thy raiment is pure: why then doſt "thou not approach and partake? How "comeſt thou to be here, if that be not "thy buſineſs? For all that are in their "ſins, are firſt thruſt out: and there-"fore thou that ſtayeſt, oughteſt to "partake of the myſteries; or elſe thou "art impudent and wicked too. Had "it not been better, if a man invited "to feaſt with a great perſon, had not "appeared, than to come, and not to "touch a bit of the meat? Even ſo it is "with thee; thou art come to this holy "Banquet; thou haſt ſung the Hymn "with all the reſt; by this very thing

"thou

"thou profeſſeſt thy ſelf in the number "of the worthy, in that thou didſt not "*depart* with the unworthy: how "comes it to paſs then, that when thou "ſtayeſt, thou doſt not partake of the "Lord's Table?

"*I am unworthy*, thou ſayeſt. Then, "I ſay again, thou art unworthy of "that Communion, which is in the "Prayers: For not only for the holy "myſteries, but for the Prayers alſo, "and for the Hymns, the Spirit deſcends "always.

"A great deal more, ſaith he, might "be added (as indeed he doth ſay much more, which I have omitted) "but that "I may not burden your minds, this "may ſuffice. And they that are not "reclaimed and brought to a better "mind, by what hath been ſaid; will "not be mended, though we ſhould ſay "never ſo much.

"And theſe things are ſaid by *us*; "But, O that he who pierces the heart, "he that gives the ſpirit of compun-"ction, would vouchſafe to prick eve-"ry one of our hearts! That theſe "things may be deeply ingrafted there, "and, in his fear, ſprout and bring "forth

"forth Fruit: ſo that, with all confi-
"dence and freedom we may approach
"unto him, and it may be ſaid as it is
"in the Pſalms (though to a different
"ſence) *Thy Children are like Olive*
"*Branches, round about thy Table.*

The End of the ſecond Diſcourſe.

Diſcourſe

Diſcourſe III.

A RESOLUTION OF DOUBTS About Receiving the Holy Communion.

THE Neceſſity of this Holy Duty, the high Obligations we have unto it, and the reaſons why it ought to be frequently performed by Chriſtian People, have been ſo fully and ſo plainly laid before you, in the two preceding Diſcourſes; that I cannot but think, all that will take the pains to conſider them, muſt

muſt be convinced both of the one, and of the other; of the duty, and of the repetition of it frequently.

For I have ſhown, that it is a part of the daily ſervice, which Chriſt appointed in his Church; a principal part of that ſervice; whereby we maintain our Communion with him, and with his benefits: and therefore cannot be neglected, as now it generally is; without the greateſt offence to him, and as great diſhonour to our holy Religion. Which I have demonſtrated hath been many ways corrupted and depraved, by the lamentable careleſneſs of Chriſtian People, in this great office of it. Who muſt be perſwaded therefore, if they make any Conſcience of their ways, to reſolve to do this in remembrance of their Saviour, oftner than they have done.

And what impediment there can be, to the putting ſuch reſolutions in Execution, I cannot imagine; unleſs it be ſome particular exceptions, which they, in their own private thoughts, take, not againſt the duty, but againſt *their* performance of it; at leaſt for the preſent. For how neceſſary, how beneficial ſoever it

it be in it ſelf, and may be unto others; yet unto *them*, ſome fanſie, it is not ſo: but rather they ought to forbear the Communion, until they be ſatisfied about ſome things, in which they are doubtful. For while thoſe doubts and ſcruples remain in their minds unremoved, they think they have a juſt reaſon to hinder them from coming to the Lord's Table: nay, they ſay they dare not come, for fear of offending the Divine Majeſty; and ſo perſwade themſelves they are as religious in ſtaying away, as others may be in going thither.

Now theſe exceptions which they make againſt their performance of this duty, are generally drawn from one of theſe *three* heads.

Firſt, From the *form* or *manner* wherein the holy Communion is now adminiſtred in our Church.

Secondly, From the *Company* to whom it is adminiſtred, and with whom it muſt be received.

Thirdly, From the *perſon himſelf* who is called upon to receive it: who judges himſelf altogether unfit for ſo ſolemn a duty.

Unto all which I doubt not to make a ſatisfactory Anſwer; if men be as willing to be rid of their ſcruples, as to retain them: but ſhall moſt largely indeavour to ſatisfie the laſt; becauſe it is the greateſt and moſt weighty.

I.

About the *firſt* of theſe [*the form or manner wherein the Holy Communion is adminiſtred, in this Church*] a long Diſcourſe cannot be expected, for it is not proper in this place. Nor is there any need at all of it: but it may ſuffice to ſay a very few things in anſwer to it.

For let it but be conſidered, *firſt*, how *various* the minds of men are, how *weak* and *captious*, which diſpoſes them, too oft, to boggle at every thing, with which they have not had a long acquaintance: And then you will, *next* of all, grant me, that it is impoſſible for any man before-hand, to know or imagine, till he ſpeak with them, what ſuch minds will object or ſcruple about this matter. For ſome have a fancy againſt one thing, ſome againſt another: That which one allows, another diſapproves: and that which he diſapproves, another allows: And

And the very beſt conſtitutions, it is poſſible, are diſapproved by many narrow, weak, and ſcrupulous minds.

Now this being granted, which cannot be denied, that it is impoſſible, in ſo many ſeveral ways wherein ſeveral men wander, to trace every man's errors, find out his particular conceits, and purſue him from ſcruple to ſcruple, till no more be ſtarted, all that is pertinent to be ſaid in this caſe, will be reduced to ſo ſmall a compaſs; that there is but *one advice only*, which can be given for ſuch mens ſatisfaction. Which is this:

That *ſeeing it is certainly our Chriſtian duty, to communicate together at the Lord's Table, in ſome form, manner and method or other; they that are diſſatisfied with that order and method, which our Church uſes, ought in Conſcience, to apply themſelves to their ſpiritual Paſtors privately, and make known to them their objections againſt it, with a mind ready and deſirous to receive ſatisfaction.* For in an age which abounds, with ſuch varibus fancies, and conceits as we ſometimes meet withal, no Miniſter of Chriſt can be able to gueſs, before he confer with them, what every one of his flock will

object to the preſent eſtabliſhed way of Worſhip; and therefore cannot out of the *Pulpit* attempt an Anſwer to them without running the hazard of ſpeaking at random, and beating the air: in gueſſing that to be objected which is not, or omitting that which is; and which, perhaps, he could not imagine would have been objected. For which reaſons, it is impoſſible, even for the *Preſs* it ſelf to meet with every particular exception; though a large Book ſhould be written on the ſubject.

And therefore the ſhort, the ſure, and the eaſie way to certain ſatisfaction, is for every one that hath any thing to ſay, againſt the manner and form of divine adminiſtrations among us, which hinder him from communicating; to addreſs himſelf to his ſpiritual Guide, whom God hath ſet over him (or to ſome other diſcreet and learned Miniſter of God's Word) and to lay open his whole mind before him, that he may free him from his ſcruples.

Unto this every man is bound, becauſe he is bound to communicate; but cannot, he ſays, till theſe ſcruples be removed: which therefore he ought to endea-

endeavour to have removed; by this means, which is of God's own Preſcription. And being uſed uprightly, with a ſincere deſire to be rightly informed, and a humble willingneſs to learn; and being continued with conſtancy, from time to time, and not preſently laid aſide, becauſe the mind is not immediately convinced; will, I doubt not, by God's bleſſing, in the iſſue diſpoſſeſs that man of his doubts, and bring him to conformity, who ſeriouſly tries it with patience.

II.

As for the *ſecond* head, from whence objections are drawn againſt the practice of this Chriſtian duty; *viz. the Company which partakes at the Table of the Lord*; which ſome perhaps think unfit for them to communicate withal: I ſhall anſwer to it a little more largely.

I. And *firſt*, I take it to be undoubtedly certain, that no Man or Woman, who profeſſes and underſtands Chriſtianity, and do not contradict their profeſſion by a profane and ſcandalous converſation, can lawfully be denied the Holy Communion, when

they preſent themſelves to receive it. For who were they for whom Chriſt prepared this Table, but his Diſciples? And what other rule have we whereby to judge who are his Diſciples, but only by mens profeſſing Chriſtianity, and by their living (for any thing that appears to the contrary) ſutable to this profeſſion? If ſuch as theſe may not be admitted to the holy Communion (and conſequently we receive with ſuch) then none are to be admitted; but we muſt turn all people whatſoever from it: and ſo, breaking all Chriſtian Communion, for want of Company to partake of this Sacrament, extinguiſh the Ordinance it ſelf, which Chriſt hath moſt ſolemnly appointed.

II. Now this being ſetled as a well-grounded truth, it follows, that no good Chriſtian can be forward to judge others to be unworthy to communicate: but rather will be very ſcrupulous, leſt he offend in ſo judging. For it is ſo much againſt the rules of Chriſtianity, to paſs ſuch cenſures on others, that they who are too forward to do it, are as unworthy, for any thing that I can ſee, as any other

other perſons whom they cenſure. Becauſe they act contrary to the Chriſtian Religion; which makes it a ſin to be haſty in condemning our Neighbours: there being ſuch great danger that we may be miſtaken.

For though a man have contradicted his Chriſtian profeſſion in ſome things, yet this is a truth wherein we all agree; that whoſoever is a true penitent, and purpoſes to leave thoſe ſins whereby he hath contradicted it, is, by that repentance, reſtored to Friendſhip with God: and therefore really worthy to receive the holy Communion. Now whether a man, whom you judge unworthy, have this ſerious, ſetled purpoſe or no, is very hard for you to know: ſince you cannot ſee into any man's heart, nor know what is between God and him in ſecret. But he coming to the Lord's Table, you ought rather to judge that he doth ſo purpoſe and reſolve: becauſe he is invited thither upon thoſe terms, and no other; nay, required to come ſo prepared, or elſe not dare to approach unto it. For ſo you find it, in the *Exhortation* that is read, when the Miniſter giveth warning for the celebration of the

holy Sacrament. And ſo he ſpeaks again at the time of the Celebration, in thoſe known words.

Ye that do truly and earneſtly repent you of your ſins, and are in love and charity with your Neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the Commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways; draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort.

III. And that leads to the next. Our Church, you ſee, proceeds according to the undoubted Rule I named at firſt: for its Conſtitutions do not admit, but exclude all ſcandalous perſons from this holy Sacrament. And therefore you ought not to depart from its Communion, when any Miniſter thereof doth admit ſuch evil Livers to it; becauſe it is his perſonal fault, who alone is to be charged with it; and not any fault of the Church, which ought not to bear the blame, nor upon this account to be forſaken.

Nay, that Miniſter himſelf perhaps may not be in fault: having no knowledge of the ſcandal: and therefore not to be blamed.

And

And more than this, he perhaps who complains of the ſcandal, is the very man upon whom this blame will light at laſt. For if he knew of any ſuch notorious evil Liver, who was admitted to the Communion, his duty was not thereupon to withdraw himſelf from it, but to make proof of the ſcandal whereof ſuch a man ſtood guilty; that he might not, without amendment, and open Declaration of his repentance, be admitted to it again. Which this Exceptioner neglecting to do, his abſtaining from the Communion, becauſe of ſuch offence, is the effect of his own negligence in another duty of Chriſtianity. And ſo he becomes doubly guilty; both in withdrawing himſelf from the holy Communion; and in not acquainting thoſe with the crimes (which he pretends for the cauſe of his with-drawing) who were concerned to redreſs them.

IV. And, *laſtly*, ſuppoſe that, after information given, they, who are concerned, do not take care to redreſs thoſe things, but ſuch ſcandalous Livers be ſtill admitted to the Communion; yet,

this not being the fault of private perſons, but of thoſe who have power to exclude them, it ought not to keep any good Man or Woman from the Table of the Lord. For there can be no reaſon, why any man ſhould be hindred by this from doing his own duty; becauſe another man doth not diſcharge his.

And let it here be ſeriouſly conſidered, that if this were a juſt hindrance, it would have hindred Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, and the primitive Chriſtians, from communicating. For there was ill Company among the very firſt Communicants; *Judas*, the Traitor, in all likelihood, being there when our Lord himſelf adminiſtred. And in this Church of *Corinth* it is evident, there were ſuch diſorders, that many did eat and drink their own Damnation: and yet it did not hinder good Chriſtians from partaking with them to their Salvation.

And the very truth is, if this were a ſufficient reaſon to hinder us from Communion, it ought alſo to hinder us from being Chriſtians; and make us forbear to become members of any Church or profeſſion. For there is no Church, but conſiſts of a mixt multitude, good and

and bad, and therefore compared by our Saviour unto a *Net*; wherein all ſorts of Fiſh were caught, *Matth.* xiii. 47, 48. and unto a *Field* wherein *Wheat* and *Tares* ſprung up, which muſt grow together, till the Harveſt, leſt by an indiſcreet indeavour to gather up the Tares, the Wheat be alſo rooted up with them, *ver.* 24, 25, 29, 30.

And therefore this ſcruple driven home, will deſtroy Chriſtianity; as it hath done in ſome places: where men have divided and ſubdivided, till, by their ſeparation from them whom they accounted wicked, they have crumbled into nothing; and left no Church at all remaining, but what was in their particular perſon. That is, none: for the Church is a Society; and there is no Society, nor can be any, but we may find ſome exception or other againſt every perſon in it: and particularly againſt ſuch perſons, who judging others unworthy to Communicate with them, abſtain on that account from the holy Communion.

For, beſides the ſuſpicion of raſh judging, and pride that is in the thing, they are apparently guilty of a groſs ſin; in

in not coming to the holy Communion of Chriſt's Body and Bloud, according to his Commandment. The ſecret reaſon of which, perhaps, they do not declare; and ſo others have as much Authority to judge them unworthy, as they to judge others: and, by this means, all of them, if this be a juſt excuſe, may let the holy Communion alone.

I hope you ſee by this ſhort Diſcourſe, whither ſuch exceptions as theſe lead; and therefore that you will no longer be guided by them: but, notwithſtanding the faults you think you can find in any perſon there preſent, be perſwaded by the weighty reaſons you ſee for it, to do your own duty at the Table of the Lord.

III.

Where we ſhould have more Company, than is uſually ſeen there, were it not for another hinderance, ariſing, not from others, but from mens ſelves alone. Who are wont ſometimes to ſay, We would come to the Table of the Lord, being convinced it is our duty; if we were worthy of ſo great a benefit: but we are deterred from it, by the conſi-

conſideration of our many ſins, or great frailties. We have, at leaſt, too many diverſions by buſineſs, too many avocations by the affairs of this World: for I am alway in a hurry, ſaith one; I have no leiſure to examine my ſelf; or I am not diſpoſed for ſo ſerious a work, ſaith another. We had better forbear, than be raſh, ſay all of this ſort: it is ſafer to honour the Sacrament by a fearful and reverent abſtinence from it, than by a careleſs and unprepared forwardneſs to partake of it, profane it. In a word, we conceive our ſelves to be utterly unfit, therefore we dare not come to it.

Now in anſwer to this *third* Exception againſt the performance of this duty, which hath a ſhew of humility in it, and looks like a pious care not to do good things in an ill manner, I have many things to propound to your conſideration; which are ſo convincing, and will ſo unmask the dangerous deceit that lurks under ſuch pretences, that they will not ſuffer you to be cheated by it any longer.

I. And, in the firſt place, every one who complains of his unfitneſs, and makes

makes that the reaſon of his not coming to the Holy Communion, ought to conſider, both whoſe fault this is, and whether it be not likely he ſhall grow ſtill more unfit every day than other; that is, be more in fault, by not receiving it. For you will not, you cannot ſay it is our Saviour's fault, who commands you to come, that you are not fit to come to it. Whoſe fault is it then, but your own? And why do you not then amend it, leſt you ſtill grow greater ſtrangers to him; nay, Enemies, by evil works, and by continuing to neglect the means of living better?

For this very unfitneſs, which you alledge for your forbearing the Communion, is your ſin; and will you turn your ſin into an Apology, and make it ſerve as your Plea, for the neglect of a plain duty? Can you think that this will paſs at the Bar of the Divine Judgment, when you appear before it? Dare you thus excuſe your neglect of the Sacrament, by acknowledging another crime? When an accuſation, a juſt accuſation lies againſt you, will you then go about to turn it into a defence of your ſelf, as you are bold to do now?

I come

I come not to the holy Communion it is true, but it is becauſe I am unholy; I am ſenſible of the looſeneſs of my life, which is not ſtrict enough; I am not in Charity; or, at beſt I am Worldly minded, and too much diſtracted with the affairs of this life.

This is the plea of ſome men: who do not mind, how, after a ſtrange manner, they make one ſin an excuſe for another. For this is the plain ſence of their Plea, God, we hope, will be merciful to us in forgiving one ſin, becauſe we commit another, which is the cauſe thereof: Pardon, that is, the neglect of the Sacrament, becauſe they neglect to fit themſelves for it. For none can deny, that it is one ſin not to commemorate the Death of Chriſt, as he hath appointed: and it is alſo another, to neglect a due preparation for it. And ſo inſtead of amending one, ſuch men add another to it; heaping evil upon evil, and aggravating their Condemnation by their very pleas and excuſes.

Of which they could not be thus ſenſleſly guilty; were this plain truth duly conſidered; *That there is the ſame reaſon to be ſcrupulous about this unfitneſs, where-*

of

of they complain, that there is to be ſo, about their unworthy receiving. And yet, they take no notice of the one, any further than only to make it an excuſe for the other. What unjuſt, what partial dealing is this? What kind of Chriſtians are theſe? who, if they were ſerious and in good earneſt religious (as ſome of this ſort would be thought to be) would be as afraid to remain unfit, as they are to receive while they ſo continue. They would be as ſcrupulous, leſt they ſhould offend God by ſtaying away, as they ſeem to be, leſt they ſhould offend him by coming to the Communion. For they would ſee, that it is very unequal dealing with God and with their own Souls, to be very nice about the doing that which God hath commanded; and to have little or no ſcruple about the omiſſion of it. What is this, but to fanſie that when God commands a thing to be done by us, we may ſafely let it alone, if our not doing it proceed from a fear of doing it wrong? As if we did not offend him, by not doing what he bids us, as much as by doing it amiſs: and our total neglect of a duty, were not as great a provocation, as an undue performance.

Do-

Do but conſider it throughly, and you will find there is as much cauſe to be ſolicitous about the one, as about the other. And if all they that are now full of fears about unworthy receiving, would but be fearful alſo of continuing unworthy to receive (*i. e.* of ſinful neglect of the holy Communion) this equal fear on both ſides, would make them ſolicitouſly diligent, in fitting themſelves to be worthy gueſts at the Lord's Table. That ſo, they may neither offend by coming, nor by ſtaying away: but approach in a becoming and well prepared manner; and find grace and favour with God to come every day, more and more prepared.

For by coming, as well prepared as our affairs in this World will admit, with ſerious reſolutions to amend our lives; we grow ſtill more fit, if we frequent it, to come better diſpoſed to the Table of the Lord; with ſtronger reſolutions; and conſequently with more fruits meet for repentance of amendment of life. For by doing our duty, as well as we can, we learn to do it with greater perfection; eſpecially if we continue to do it, though for the preſent with many imperfections. But

But alas! will ſome ſay, we are not only utterly unfit and unprepared for the preſent, but it is not in our power to fit and prepare our ſelves, in any ſort, to be meet partakers of theſe holy myſteries for the future.

To which, it is neceſſary, that I ſay ſomething before I proceed further: becauſe, if this be true, all my labour will be loſt in perſwading men to diſpoſe themſelves for the performance of this holy duty.

1. And here the ſame queſtion might be askt ſuch perſons, which I askt at the firſt, How comes it not to be in your power, and whoſe fault is it, that you are not able to fit your ſelves? But I omit this, becauſe it only throws the guilt upon ſuch complainers, but doth not convince them of the falſeneſs of their Plea. Therefore I rather demand of ſuch men, How they can pretend to Chriſtianity, and ſay, that they cannot leave off their habitual courſe of ſinning?

What? Is there no power in the Chriſtian Religion to alter a man's heart; and to bring him to repentance and reformation of life? Cannot he, who, by being

being made a Chriſtian, is *regenerate with the holy Spirit*, ceaſe to follow and to be led by thoſe carnal Luſts and Worldly deſires, which at his Baptiſm he renounced? Cannot he, for inſtance, forbear habitual Drunkenneſs, Swearing, Extortion, and Profaneneſs? Is it impoſſible for him to be at peace with his Neighbour? to lay aſide all wrath, bitterneſs, and wilful animoſities? How is he then born again of the Spirit? By what power were men changed and renewed in the beginning of our Religion, which we have not now, ſince we have the ſame Religion? Or to what purpoſe are we exhorted every day, to beſeech God to *grant us true repentance, and his holy Spirit, that thoſe things which we do at that preſent may pleaſe him; and the reſt of our life be pure and holy*; if no ſuch thing can be obtained from our Heavenly Father; no, not by importunate Prayers unto him for it?

Do not, for ſhame, ſay any longer you have no power to fit your ſelves for the holy Communion, that is, to become better: unleſs you will renounce Chriſtianity; and declare there is nothing in it, but vain words, empty ſhows and appearances.

2. Which

2. Which this ſort of men I am ſure cannot do, having ſomething in them, which will ſatisfie them, if they attend unto it, that they do not ſay true; when they pretend they cannot leave off thoſe ſins, which keep them from the Communion. For how can they be called ſins, if it be impoſſible to do otherways? And if they be no ſins, how can they hinder you from Communicating? Why do your Conſciences accuſe you of doing amiſs, if you could not but do as you did? They never accuſe you in other caſes, where there is an utter impoſſibility, under which you labour. For inſtance, if a Neighbours Houſe be on fire, you do not accuſe your ſelf for not running to help to quench it; when you lay lame in Bed, and diſabled to move out of it. But if you ſet the Houſe on fire, you could not but think you did him a great injury: or if you ſtood by in perfect health and ſoundneſs, when it took fire, and would not ſtir hand or foot to help him; you could not but look upon your ſelf as unneighbourly, unkind, and cruel. In like manner if it were as impoſſible to forbear

bear a ſin, as it is to ſtir when you are bound hand and foot, your Conſciences would never accuſe you. But the upbraidings you feel there, the ſecret checks and remorſe, the ſuſpicions and fears, which your Conſciences are troubled withal, plainly declare, that it was in your power; and that *you lie, and do not the truth* (as S. *John* ſpeaks) when you pretend the contrary.

In ſhort, if you cannot poſſibly reform thoſe ſins, which make you unfit for the Communion, how come you to charge them upon your ſelves as ſins? If they be ſins, your own Conſciences tell you that you can avoid them: and if you can, why do you not go about it? and by doing this, prepare your ſelves to do the other: I mean to receive the holy Communion; for which you will be fit, when you have quitted thoſe ſins wherein you live.

3. For the ſins which you ſay you cannot reform, are either ſins of weakneſs, or ſins of wilfulneſs. If they be only ſuch *weakneſſes*, as can ſcarce poſſibly be avoided, by the care and watchfulneſs of good men, but they are, upon

upon ſome occaſions, ſurprized with them: ſurely theſe do not make you unfit for the holy Communion; for then all men living, for ought we know, muſt be unfit. If they be ſins of *wilfulneſs*, then you do, in theſe very words, confeſs that they may be reformed: For wilful ſins, in the judgment of all mankind, are ſuch as by care and diligence and watchfulneſs over our ſelves, may be avoided. As wilful Drunkenneſs, is not being intoxicated, with ſome liquor, of whoſe ſtrength we were ignorant; but loſing the Government of our ſelves, when we were aware of the danger, and could have prevented it.

4. But this, in effect, hath been ſaid already: and therefore, to bring this matter to a ſpeedy iſſue, let ſuch as ſay they have no power to prepare themſelves for the Communion, by amending their lives, conſider; that every man hath power to do, what he can do. To ſay otherways, is a contradiction: for it is to ſay, he cannot do what he can. Now do what you can, and I will undertake, God ſhall not charge you with what you cannot. But if you do not

what

what you are able; you will be charged both with that, and with the guilt of not doing that, unto which in time you might have been enabled. For God hath promiſed that they who ſeek ſhall find; that he will open to them that knock, and graciouſly anſwer them that call upon him faithfully. Why then do you not addreſs your ſelf to the doing that, which you certainly can do? for inſtance, call upon God, and earneſtly importune him for the help of his grace (which is a thing you can do:) for, in ſo doing, God will not be wanting to you; but inable you to that, which, for the preſent, it may not be in your power to do.

5. Unto which (*laſtly*) let this be added, which is of great moment. You that ſay, you cannot prepare your ſelves for the holy Communion; have you ever tried? have you gone about the work, and made a ſerious and hearty attempt towards the reformation of your ſelves? If you have not, how come you to be ſo bold as to ſay, you cannot do that, which you have not yet tried and endeavoured to do? what a prevarication is this,

this, with God and your own Conſciences? though I doubt this is the caſe of moſt of thoſe men, who plead inability; when they never in good earneſt, made an experiment what might be done, in the uſe of ſuch means as God hath appointed, and are in our power to uſe.

But if you have tried, and miſcarried; why did you not try again; and after that, again and again; and that with greater diligence and care than before? For this you could have done; and why ſhould it be judged reaſonable in our Worldly affairs, to attempt over and over again the ſame thing, wherein we have failed at the firſt, in hope of better ſucceſs at laſt: and not be thought fit, nay, why ſhould we not be willing to uſe the ſame repeated diligence, notwithſtanding ſuch like diſcouragement, in the weighty concernments of our Souls?

And ſince we find by experience we can do the one, for we do it; we ought to conclude that we can, if we ſet our ſelves to it, do the other. For a Soul can do more for it ſelf, than for any thing elſe; if it will but conſider what a valuable being it is, and where its true intereſt

intereſt lies: in the love and favour of God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

This is the firſt anſwer to the pretence of unfitneſs. And what was laſt ſaid, may ſerve for an anſwer alſo to thoſe that complain of hardneſs of heart, and want of affection in the performance of this holy duty. Let them do it as well as they are able; and they will find acceptance with God, and grow more affected with his love. And for an Anſwer to thoſe alſo, that ſay they are never the better for coming to this Sacrament. It is certain they were ſomething the better, by their very coming thither; if they did not come without a reſolution of amendment: for that reſolution was a good thing, and the work of God's grace. Which though they did not keep, they ſhould not thereby have been diſcouraged from coming again, but rather have renewed it; which had been ſtill a better thing. And they ought not to have given over the attempt, upon a new miſcarriage; but ſtill laboured and endeavoured to ſettle this reſolution ſo ſtedfaſtly, by conſtant renewals of their Covenant with Chriſt; that at laſt it might

have ſtood unmoveable, in all thoſe temptations which were wont to overthrow it.

This is the way of Chriſt; not to ſit down contented with complaints of our unfitneſs to have Communion with him; but never to reſt ſatisfied, till by our earneſt and repeated endeavours, we be better diſpoſed.

II. And there is this great reaſon to inforce ſuch indeavours, which theſe complainers would do well to lay to heart: that if they be unfit for this holy duty, of Commemorating the Death of Chriſt, and receiving the tokens and pledges of his love; they have no cauſe to think themſelves fit for other holy duties, which are confeſſed by all to be of daily uſe; *viz.* for *Prayer*, for *Thanksgiving*, and *praiſing God:* Which duties, if men be not fit to perform; they ought to look upon themſelves as not fit to live in the World, or to go out of it: but if they be not unfit for theſe, then how how can they ſay, they are unfit for this; ſince our part in the holy Communion, is wholly performed by devout Prayer, and Praiſe and Thankſ-

Thankſgiving, with ſuch Faith and Love and holy reſolutions as ought always to accompany thoſe holy actions? And our part being thus performed, what reaſon have we to think that God will not perform his; by accounting us worthy to receive thoſe bleſſings, which he there imparts? For he is always more ready to give, than we are to receive: and we are not unmeet to receive, when we are thus diſpoſed to ask.

To this purpoſe you may remember, I alledged S. *Chryſoſtom*'s words in my former Diſcourſe. *Art thou not worthy to partake of the Sacrifice? then art thou not worthy neither to pray: but thou oughteſt to depart when the Deacon cries, Be gone all you, that are in penance, &c.* For the holy Communion is a ſpecial way of praying and making Supplication to God, through Chriſt *Jeſus*: for which they cannot be unfit, who are fit to pray to God in his name at all.

No, I am apt to think that many men who pretend this, do not really think themſelves unfit; but uſe it only as a ſhift to excuſe themſelves from the performance of their duty. For ſhould the Miniſter of God upon this ſcore keep

thoſe from the Communion, who now keep themſelves from it; ſaying to them (as of old) *Be gone, you are not fit to partake with us*; they would take it very hainouſly at his hands, and be apt to reply; We are as fit as many whom you admit to partake with you; you do us an injury in thruſting us away from the Table of the Lord; where we ſee thoſe entertained that are no better than our ſelves.

For which ill reſentment, of ſuch a ſuppoſed judgment paſſed upon them, what reaſon can be given but this; that they have no ſuch opinion of their own unfitneſs? For if they had, they would be pleaſed rather than angry, that other men are of their mind: as they deſire they ſhould be in other caſes. They would be far from looking upon it as an indignity, to be told they are not fit to Communicate: it being the thing, which they themſelves pretend doth keep them from the Communion. But herein they diſſemble with us, and cheat their own Souls; having no ſuch thoughts of themſelves, but are only loth to be at the pains of thinking ſeriouſly what is to be done there, and of raiſing ſutable affections

fections and purpoſes in their heart; that they may be acceptable to God our Saviour.

This idle lazy temper frames ſuch excuſes, and makes them pretend unfitneſs; which they are by no means willing to own, if another charge them with it, but rather think they are affronted by it. Juſt like thoſe that pretend to be ſick, and therefore lie in Bed, when they have no mind to make or receive thoſe Viſits to which they are obliged: but would be troubled, if another ſhould tell them they look very ill, and had beſt go to Bed, and ſend for a Phyſician; for they fear their caſe is dangerous.

III. Theſe things ſeem to me ſufficient to take away this exception of *unfitneß:* but for the further conviction of all ſuch perſons, as alledge this for the reaſon of their not receiving the holy Communion, let it be conſidered; that there are other duties of Chriſtianity, which are of indiſpenſable obligation, if we hope to be ſaved; and thoſe far more difficult to be performed, than the duties now mentioned, or this to which I exhort you: for which if you

be not fit, as is pretended, how will you be able to undertake the other, where you will find much greater hardſhip and ſeverity?

That is, how will you be able to deny your ſelves, and take up the Croſs, if it fall in your way; and follow Chriſt in that bloudy path wherein he is gone before us?

An injury will be intolerable; an indignity inſufferable, to paſs by affronts and abuſes (which are the ſmalleſt parts of the *Croſs of Chriſt*) will be beyond your power; if you cannot do ſo eaſie a thing as this, which Chriſt hath commanded in remembrance of his ſufferings: whereby you are to prepare, and arm your ſelves with reſolution to atchieve the other.

This is a thing to be ſeriouſly pondered; becauſe it is ſo neceſſary to be able *to indure hardſhip as a good Souldier of Jeſus Chriſt*, and perform thoſe difficult tasks when we are tried by them, that otherwiſe it is in vain to pretend to the Chriſtian Religion. For our Lord Chriſt himſelf hath ſaid Matth. xvi. 24. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs and follow me, &c.*

&c. Which is often repeated in the Goſpel, with peremptory aſſeverations; that unleſs he do this, a man cannot be his Diſciple; and that *he who takes not up his Croſs and follows after me* (as our Saviour's words are, *Matth.* x. 38.) *is not worthy of me.*

Theſe Sayings of our Saviour ſhow that this work of ſelf-denial and taking up the Croſs and bearing it, is not more harſh and troubleſome to fleſh and bloud, than it is neceſſary to make a man acceptable unto Chriſt: who will reject thoſe as unworthy of him, that are not thus diſpoſed. Now how they will be able to go through with this tedious and irkſome work, who ſtick at the ſweet and pleaſant labour of making themſelves fit to receive the tokens and pledges of Chriſt's Everlaſting love; whereby they ſhould be incouraged and animated unto the other, I leave them to judge. For my part, I can ſee no hope of it; but look upon their condition as deſperate, unleſs they diſpoſe themſelves even for the ſufferings of the Croſs, by fitting themſelves for the devout Commemoration of the ſufferings of Chriſt upon the Croſs.

Which is ſo eaſie a duty compared with the other, that I may ſhame all thoſe who refuſe to perform it, when it is required of them, in ſuch opprobrious words as *Naaman's* Servant made bold to reprove him withal, 2 *Kings* v. 13. *If the Prophet had bidden thee do ſome great thing, wouldſt thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he ſaith unto thee, waſh and be clean?* So ſay I, if our Lord ſhould now require you to conflict with the greateſt hardſhips, would you not obey, rather than periſh? How much rather then, when he ſaith, unto you, *Do this in remembrance of me?* Which is ſo eaſie to be done, that there is no trouble in it; but all pleaſure, all comfort, and joy, to think what Chriſt hath done for us, and intends to do. All the trouble and the pains is, only to fit and diſpoſe our ſelves to partake of this high pleaſure and ſatisfaction; of being aſſured that we are beloved by him, and that he will love us for ever, if we continue in his love by keeping his Commandments.

IV. Which ſmall pains, if men will not undertake, but having paſſed this judg-

judgment on themſelves that they are unmeet to receive the holy Communion, continue ſo to be; I do not underſtand why they ſhould not, withal, judge themſelves not to be Chriſtians.

For all Chriſtians are Members of Chriſt, a part of his Body: but how can any man be a member of the Body, and not be in Communion with the head? and how is it poſſible to be in Communion with the head, and yet unfit to Communicate with him? Theſe things cannot ſtand together but overthrow one the other.

For they that are members of Chriſt, are united to him: and they that are united to him are in Communion with him, & derive continual influences from him: and they that are in ſuch Conjunction and Communion with him, muſt be fit to Communicate with him at his Table. Elſe they are not his Friends: and if not Friends, then Strangers, or Enemies. For what *medium* is there between theſe? Or how can men pretend to be Friends to Chriſt, by being in Covenant with him; and refuſe to commemorate his Death, which ſeals that Covenant, becauſe they are unfit, always unfit to make that Commemoration?

Theſe things are utterly inconſiſtent. Either we muſt confeſs we are not in Covenant with him; or we muſt not affirm, that we are altogether unfit, to Commemorate that Death, which confirms and ſeals that Covenant.

V. It will be much to the ſame purpoſe, If I add, that he who is not in ſome meaſure fit for this holy Sacrament, cannot be in any meaſure fit for the Kingdom of Heaven; and Eternal Life with our bleſſed Saviour. But it may be fit to preſs this a little; becauſe the ſame thing, in effect, repreſented after divers manners, becomes the more apt to meet with, and affect all ſorts of people.

Conſider then, in what diſpoſition do you think you ſtand for Society with Chriſt in Eternal Life and Bliſs, in the Heavens; if you are not diſpoſed to have Communion with him in this holy Sacrament here upon Earth? What likelihood can you fanſie of having His Company there, if He cannot have your Company here?

That which keeps you from the one, will exclude you from the other. I mean, thoſe

thoſe things, whatſoever they be, that make you unmeet to partake of his Table at preſent, will make you unmeet to feaſt with him in his Heavenly Kingdom hereafter. The terms of admiſſion unto both are the ſame (for he that duly partakes of the holy Communion, hath an earneſt given him of Everlaſting Bliſs) and therefore there cannot be different terms of excluſion; but the very ſame alſo.

That is, thoſe ſins which exclude men from the Kingdom of Heaven, are they which exclude them from the pledge and earneſt of it, in this holy Sacrament. And thoſe ſins which do not ſhut the gate of the Heavenly Kingdom againſt them; cannot be a bar to their receiving the Sacrament: Satisfie your ſelves what thoſe ſins are of both ſorts, and you will withal ſatisfie your ſelves that you are not unfit to come to the holy Communion, unleſs you be unfit to enter into Heaven: and if you be unfit for that, I do not ſee how you can reſt ſatisfied, if you have any care of your Souls, till by becoming capable to be received thither, you become capable to be entertained at the Lord's Table.

For

For which every ſudden paſſion, every raſh word, every ſin that is committed by ſurpriſe againſt the ſetled purpoſe of our Souls and ſerious endeavours, will not make us utterly unfit; becauſe ſuch things will not ſhut us out of Heaven. But thoſe groſs, thoſe deliberate and habitual ſins, that bar the Door of Heaven againſt us, are the ſame that put a bar againſt our coming to the Lord's Table: and the ſame that keep us from partaking of that, are they that will keep us from being partakers of the other.

And therefore reſolve, what it is fit for you to do; the matter being come to this ſhort iſſue, that if you are not fit for the Lord's Table, neither are you fit for Heaven: if you hope you are ſo fit for Heaven that you ſhall not be thruſt out of it, then are you not unfit for the Lord's Table. Why then do you not come thither; when you cannot ſtay away, without acknowledging that you have no intereſt in Chriſt and his Eternal Love?

So the ancient Doctrine was, as we learn from S. *Auſtin*, who (in his firſt Book concerning the *deſerts and remiſſi-*

on

on of ſins, Chap. 24.) tells us, that in his Country they called Baptiſm SALVATION, and the Sacrament of Chriſt's Body by no other name than LIFE: from an ancient and Apoſtolical Tradition, as he thinks; whereby the Churches of Chriſt hold for certain, that no body can attain either *Salvation* or *Life* in the Kingdom of God, without *Baptiſm*, and the participation of the Table of the Lord.

Which none can gainſay is thus far true, that we know of no other gates but theſe; Chriſt hath appointed no other, to let us into his Kingdom: and that they who are unworthy to partake of the holy myſteries of his Kingdom, cannot be worthy to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven it ſelf.

VI. If obſtinacy (as he ſpeaks a little before in that Book) did not knit its ſtubborn ſinews, againſt the force of evident truth, I might here make an end. But ſome ſtill perſiſt in their exceptions and ſay; if we be not unfit, yet we fear we are: and how ſhall we free our ſelves from theſe fears and jealouſies, which extreamly diſturb

our

our minds, and put us into ſuch diſorder; that we cannot compoſe our ſelves for the holy Communion?

In the laſt place therefore, I anſwer to this by asking a few plain and eaſie queſtions: upon which, if you will examine your ſelves, you will ſoon arrive at ſatisfaction.

Do you not make profeſſion of Chriſtianity?

Do you not believe what that Religion teaches?

Do you not endeavour impartially to practiſe according to that belief?

Do you not *diſcern* or diſtinguiſh *the Lord's Body?* that is, make a difference between this holy food, and other meat and drink?

Do you not underſtand the ends for which it was appointed?

What can hinder you then from partaking of the Lord's Body, if therein you intend thoſe ends?

Here is a ſure and infallible Teſt, unto which, if you bring your ſelves, you may try thereby, whether you be fit or no to have Communion with Chriſt in this holy Sacrament: and determine the caſe with ſuch certainty, as to be no longer

longer perplexed with doubts and fears about it.

1. The firſt of theſe queſtions, need not be long conſidered, for by receiving Baptiſm, and being preſent at the Prayers, where the Creeds are openly owned, you *make a profeſſion of Chriſtianity*: and therefore you are thus far fit, and have a right and title to come and make this profeſſion ſtill more ſolemnly at the Table of the Lord.

2. The ſecond alſo is ſoon reſolved, whether *you believe with your heart, what you profeſs with your mouth?* For theſe doubts and fears, which you have, leſt you ſhould receive the Communion unworthily, and thereby incur the divine diſpleaſure, ſuppoſe Faith in Chriſt, as the Lord and Judge of the World: and that you look upon this as one part of a Chriſtians Duty, which ought to be performed with care and great circumſpection.

3. The third alſo need not coſt you much labour; for by reading over the rules of life delivered in the Goſpel, and comparing your manner of life with them; you may be ſatisfied, *whether you impartially endeavour to practiſe according*

cording to your belief? That is, do you not willingly reſt under any habit of ſin, which excludes from this Sacrament, as they do from Heaven: but make it your ſerious buſineſs to break them all? Then you ought to uſe this means among others, which God hath appointed, and call upon him for his aid (without which nothing can be effected) in this ſort of Supplication: for weakneſſes bewailed, and indeavoured daily to be reformed, do not exclude us from either of them. But they rather require our diligence and conſtancy in the receiving this holy Sacrament; that we may grow *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* Which we therefore want, becauſe we neglect this means of obtaining it; or are poſſeſſed with ſuch vain fears, as quite damp that Faith which ſhould be exerciſed in the uſe of it.

4. For which fears there is no cauſe, when you are thus qualified; provided alſo you *diſcern the Lord's Body* in the holy Communion: that is, conſider what that Bread and Wine imports, which you ſee upon the Table of the Lord; what they ſignifie and repreſent unto

unto you; and what ſpiritual grace is imparted to you by their means: which your very Catechiſm teaches you, *is the Body and Blood of Chriſt, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.*

5. Of this therefore you cannot be ignorant: and if you believe it, and expect it; underſtanding alſo what your eating and drinking of that Bread and Wine means; and for what end you come to the holy Table; what can there remain to be done, to make you know certainly whether you may partake thereof ſafely, nay profitably or no, but only the laſt thing I mentioned?

6. Whether you intend to do there, what the Lord commands; and to receive thoſe benefits which he there imparts? Not eating and drinking, that is, as at a common Table, to ſatisfie your hunger, and quench your thirſt; not receiving with the ſame common ſpirit, and the ſame unattentiveneſs, wherewith you receive other food: but compoſing your ſelf ſeriouſly, as at the Lord's Table, in a holy place, where he is preſent, thankfully to Commemorate his Death; to partake of that Sacrifice which

which he offered for us on the Croſs; to give up your ſelves, Souls and Bodies unto him; and to thank him that you have the honour to be his Servants, and that he hath purchaſed you at ſo dear a rate, as with the price of his own moſt precious bloud; to implore the continuance of his gracious and ready help upon all occaſions, *&c.* If, I ſay, with this Spirit, and for theſe and ſuch like ends, you approach to this holy Communion, you need not have the leaſt fear of being rejected as unworthy Gueſts, but ought to be confident that you ſhall be welcome to that holy Feaſt, as thoſe that are faithful unto Chriſt. For wanting none of theſe conditions, which are all that can be thought requiſite; you want nothing to make you fit and prepared to have Communion with Chriſt, in the merits of his Death, which is there commemorated.

Yes, will ſome perhaps further object, there may be ſomething ſtill wanting: For how came the *Corinthians* to be ſo ſeverely puniſhed, as we read they were, for their unworthy receiving the Communion, if theſe things be ſufficient to make men meet partakers of it? Do you not

not think that they had all the forementioned qualifications; and yet they did eat and drink their own Damnation?

I anſwer, No; it is moſt manifeſt, from the very words which mention their Damnation, that they were not thus prepared.

1. For *firſt*, they proceeded to partake of theſe holy Myſteries, at the end of their *Feaſts of Charity* (which was a common meal, where they eat & drank all together for the maintaining Brotherly kindneſs among them) they ſo perfectly confounded and blended theſe two (the Holy Feaſt on Chriſt's Sacrifice, and the common Feaſt on ordinary food) one with the other; that they made not the leaſt diſtinction: but did eat this holy Bread, and drank this holy Wine, as they did common meat and liquors; *not diſcerning the Lord's Body*, as you read *v.* 29. of this Chapter. This was one horrid ſin which they committed; not to conſider what they were doing: for they went to the Lord's Table, as if it had been ſtill their own Table; and did not diſtinguiſh between this Sacred and their ordinary food.

2. One

2. One cauſe of which *undiſcerning* ſpirit (which would not let them ſee the difference) was their riot and drunkenneſs at that Feaſt of Charity; which ought to have been only a ſober refreſhment. They revelled upon that good chear, which ſhould only have filled their hearts with love to God, the Giver of all good things, and to their Chriſtian Brethren; and thereby have prepared them to be partakers of a diviner food, which followed the other. This was another fearful ſin, of which you read, *v.* 21. where the Apoſtle ſaith, that as ſome were *hungry* at that Feaſt of Love and Friendſhip, ſo others were *drunken*.

3. Which leads me to take notice of a *third* Crime; that the rich *deſpiſed* the poor; and that in ſo vile a manner, as not to ſuffer them to feaſt with them, but to ſeparate from them, and to eat and drink by themſelves: and alſo to eat and drink up all the proviſion; leaving the poor little or nothing. *For in eating* (*viz.* at the Feaſt of Charity) *every one taketh before, his own Supper:* and ſo it came to paſs, that *one was hungry and another drunken.*

4. Which

4. Which ſuggeſt this further crime conſequent upon the former, that they turned a common Feaſt into a private; the rich looking upon what they had brought to it as their *own:* Whereas, in truth, they had no longer any propriety therein; now that they were come together into *one* and the ſame *place*, *ver.* 20. Where there ought to have been no difference made between one man and another; nor any part of the proviſion lookt upon as continuing any man's *own* proper food, after it was brought thither for the entertainment of all.

5. And that was another aggravation of their guilt, that they committed all theſe crimes, in that *holy place*, where they aſſembled for the moſt holy action of their Religion; to commemorate the Death of Chriſt, *ver.* 22. *What, have ye not Houſes to eat and drink in? or deſpiſe ye the Church of God*, &c. Which queſtion ſuppoſeth, that they might in their own private Houſes, have eaten their own Supper, alone by themſelves, or with whom it pleaſed them to invite: but in the Houſe of God, and in his divine preſence, it was intolerable; becauſe there they met upon no

no private but a publick account, to thank God for his love in Chriſt, and to teſtifie their mutual love to each other.

6. Which they were ſo far from doing, that they did the quite contrary. For true love delights to keep others in countenance; but they put ſuch to the bluſh, as were in a poor and mean condition, and could bring nothing to the common Table but themſelves. Who were by the Laws of the Feaſt, and by the rules of Charity, to have feaſted at the charge of the rich; and with as much freedom and confidence, as if they had brought the proviſion themſelves: but were lookt upon with ſuch ſcorn, that it made them ſneak; like wretched Beggars, that were to be content with the ſcraps which the rich would leave them. That's the meaning of the laſt words of that Exprobration, *ver.* 22. *and ſhame them that have not:* that is, are not able to bring any thing to eat and drink at the Feaſt of Charity.

Theſe were the grievous ſcandals committed in that Church; ſome of them in the very act of holy Communion; and all of them in their preparation to it; and in the holy place, where they were

were aſſembled to worſhip Chriſt with mutual affection one to another. Which therefore brought down heavy judgments upon them, as you read, *ver.* 29. *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation* (or *judgment*, as the margin of the Bible hath it) to *himſelf*, *not diſcerning the Lord's body*. Which that it is ſpoken of the Church of *Corinth*, the next words ſhew: which inform us alſo, what this *judgment*, (that is, *grievous puniſhment*) was. *For this cauſe many are weak, and ſickly among you, and many ſleep.*

Now what is all this to you, who are not guilty of any ſuch crimes? For no ſuch ſcandals as theſe, are committed among us, now adays any where. And therefore why ſhould you fear ſo much as the *judgment*, or *ſentence*, to ſuffer the grievous puniſhments now mentioned; ſeeing you are not guilty of their faults? Which I have purpoſely repreſented, as they are ſet down by the Apoſtle; that finding your ſelves free from them, you may not fright your ſelves away from the Communion, by a dread of that *damnation* which fell upon them. But will not fall upon you; who cannot

cannot be accuſed of their Crimes, nor of any other like to them: if you *diſcern the Lord's body*; and in a ſolemn manner come to commemorate his Death and Paſſion; renouncing all your evil ways, and being in perfect Charity with all men.

Upon ſuch God will pour down his bleſſings; and not plague them with Diſeaſes, Sickneſs, and untimely Death: much leſs with Eternal Damnation, to ſuffer the puniſhment of Everlaſting Fire. Which as it is not meant in the Apoſtles words (as I have ſhown elſewhere) ſo will not be the portion of thoſe, who come thus prepared to the Table of the Lord: but rather of thoſe who ſtay away, out of a pretence of unworthineſs; when the true reaſon is, becauſe they will not be at the pains to prepare themſelves to partake of it. Or if it be timorouſneſs of ſpirit, and a ſcrupulous fearfulneſs that keeps them from it; let them ſeriouſly weigh what hath been proved in this diſcourſe, that they have the ſame reaſon to be fearful they ſhall not enter into Eternal Life; For they that are not fit to have Communion with him in theſe Types and Figures of

of him: how can they be preſumed to be fit to have the immediate ſight and injoyment of his Divine Majeſty?

And what ſerious Chriſtian is there, that can live with any comfort, who hath no hope of that? How can he be quiet, or take any reſt, till he hath rid himſelf of every thing which he thinks makes him unmeet to have fellowſhip with Chriſt, in the Sacrament of his Body and Bloud; that ſo partaking of it religiouſly, he may have no cauſe, not to look upon himſelf, *as an heir through hope of God's Everlaſting Kingdom, by the merits of the moſt precious death and paſſion of his dear Son.*

Who invites all thoſe to come and feaſt with him, that abide in no habitual ſin (ſuch as ſhuts out of the Heavenly Kingdom:) and they ought to come without any fear of provoking his Majeſty, without any apprehenſion of danger to themſelves thereby: nay, *draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to their comfort,* and high ſatisfaction; and to the joy of the Church of Chriſt: which is highly honoured, by having abundance of worthy perſons in it, fit to communicate with their Lord at his Table.

Such worthy Communicants let us all, for our parts, ſtudy to be: by reſolving now, and indeavouring ever hereafter, to quit all known ſins, and to live ſutably to our Chriſtian profeſſion and Belief.

Then let nothing hinder you, from taking frequent occaſions, of preſenting your ſelves to the Lord at his Table.

Let no ſcruples, fears, and doubts, that ſtick in your mind, hinder you; but rather get them pulled out by ſome skilful hand. *Do not believe you are religious, becauſe you are ſcrupulous; but rather ſuſpect your ſelves not to be ſo, becauſe you neglect the great duty of Religion.* And of this be ſcrupulous, above all other things, leſt you offend God by not coming to the Communion, or rather, do not dare to be ſo bold and fearleſs, in a matter of ſuch great danger.

Let not the fault of others who communicate, be a ſtop to your performance of that duty. That is, *if they ſin one way, let not that tempt you to a ſin of another kind:* If they go wrong on the right hand; be not you moved thereby to turn too much to the left.

Let

Let not the danger of *unworthy receiving*, deter you from *receiving*; but only from *receiving unworthily*. Of which there is the leſs danger, if you be really afraid of it; for that will move you to be careful to prevent it. And remember, that nothing will make you more unworthy, than neglect of it.

And therefore let not the thoughts of your imperfections hinder you; for they will always hinder: and *ſtaying from the holy Communion is not the way to be more perfect; but coming to it.*

Nay, let not the breach of your reſolutions, by relapſing into ſin, after you have communicated, keep you from communicating again: but rather come the ſooner, and take the firſt opportunity that is preſented you, to renew your Covenant with God, to ſtrengthen your Chriſtian reſolutions, to fortifie your ſelves againſt temptations, and to obtain aſſurance of a pardon for that unfaithfulneſs to your Saviour. *To fall is not ſo dangerous, as not to riſe again preſently after we are faln.*

Much leſs let buſineſs hinder: for *if you be honeſtly imployed in honeſt buſineſs, it is part of your preparation for the holy Communion.*

And let no man ſay he wants time to fit himſelf to receive it; for this is, in effect, to ſay he wants time to live well: Of which if you take a conſtant care, that's the main preparation. And for the compoſing your mind, and conſidering the ends for which you go to the Lord's Table; *take as much time as your condition of life, and the circumſtances of your condition will allow: & that is ſufficient.*

Be not hindred from the Heavenly Comforts, of which you may there partake, by an opinion of the neceſſity of a *long examination of your ſelves* beforehand: for *that neceſſity ariſes only from long neglect of the Communion.*

Receive frequently, as the firſt Chriſtians did; and then you will be as ready for this, on all occaſions, as you are for other duties of holy Worſhip. For you will be well acquainted with the ſtate of your own Souls, and with the nature and end of this part of your Religion: eſpecially, if you take ſome account of your ſelves every day: which will make your account ſhort and eaſie before the Communion.

And let not dulneſs and indiſpoſition be thought a reaſon why you ſhould forbear

bear to receive it: but rather come thither, to be quickned. And if you continue dull there; yet *believe you have pleaſed God, by doing as he commanded, though not ſo lively as you deſired.*

Let us not hear any many ſay, I have not profited thereby; and therefore had as good ſtay away. For *it is very profitable to do our duty conſtantly*, to expreſs our gratitude to God, to receive the tokens of his Love, to tye our ſelves faſter to him in renewed reſolutions of holy obedience, to be put in fear of offending him, and in hope of his favour: and there is no man that with any kind of care partakes of the holy Communion, but receives more or leſs ſuch benefit as this by it.

Let no fancy therefore of this nature hinder you: but oppoſe to them all, the neceſſity of doing your duty, as well as you are able. Some for inſtance complain of *hardneſs of heart*, and therefore dare not come: but let ſuch underſtand, that *it is yielding and compliance, to do what Chriſt hath commanded; and not to do it, is that very hardneſs which they bemoan.*

And if any quarrel or contention happen among Neighbours, let not that

hinder neither: but rather let them come to the Communion and there be reconciled. *It is too much that we have faln out one with another; let us not fall out with our God too.*

If theſe contentions have riſen up to heats, and anger, nay wrath and evil ſpeaking: do not continue them by refraining holy Communion; but, repenting of the evil, extinguiſh all by renewing your Fellowſhip with God, and one with another. *It hath ſtaid too long if one Sun hath gone down upon your wrath: be afraid to let it reſt a whole Week, till another Communion day be come and gone.*

And ſuppoſe this wrath improves into hatreds and enmities, which you think you diſcern in ſome hearts againſt you; let not that hinder you (though it do them) but come rather and teſtifie you bear no hatred towards them, but are in *Charity with all men. To love an Enemy, is the higheſt proof of our love to God our Saviour.*

And if you be at any time ingaged in a *Suit of Law*, let not that hinder your performance of this duty: For Suits at Law, to recover or defend that which you judge your right, are not ſinful; nor

nor is it difficult to manage them without ſin, with a Friendly and Chriſtian mind: both parties referring themſelves to an indifferent Judge, and reſolving to acquieſce, as common reaſon directs, in his ſentence; for *there would be no end of contention, if every man ſhould be a Judge for himſelf.*

And do not ſay, it is too great preſumption, want of humility and modeſty, to be ſeen oft at the Lord's Table: For it can be no preſumption to love him very much; and to accept of the honour he doth us, in inviting, nay commanding us there to attend him: *It will rather be rudeneſs, and careleſs neglect of him, if we do not frequent it.*

And as for other hindrances, if we have ſome Relation or Friend that is ſick, or we our ſelves are ſomething out of order; or we have been in a Journey; or had a Viſit to make which could not well be avoided; or had a Friend come to ſee us the day before the Communion (with whom we could not but in civility, ſpend a good deal of time) theſe, and ſuch like, I am aſhamed to do more than mention; they are ſo trivial: and by no underſtanding Chriſtian can be

thought a reaſonable cauſe for putting by the intention, we have at any time of receiving this holy Sacrament.

I ſhall only add therefore, that the want of ſomething to offer at the Communion (which the poor and needy may make an exception againſt coming to it frequently) is no reaſon to keep any body away from it. For *God who accepted of the Widow, that caſt a mite into the Treaſury, would have accepted her, if ſhe had not had a mite to give*; ſhe having a willing mind, to give him, even all ſhe had.

Some muſt receive relief out of the oblations, and it is not required, that ſuch ſhould make any, but only the oblation of themſelves. Or if out of the abundance of their Love and Devotion, they do as the poor Widow did, offer all they have; they may, and ought, to receive back again, out of the offerings, much more than they gave.

Let not theſe therefore, nor any other exceptions, keep us any longer from this holy duty. The ends of which, if we often call to mind, or rather conſtantly keep in mind; with a reſolution frequently to come to the Table of the Lord,

Lord, and there to ſhow the affection we have to him, and the earneſt deſire of our Souls to partake more and more of his grace; that we may be inabled to live better and better, and get a more abſolute conqueſt over all thoſe evil luſts and affections, which ſtruggle for the Maſtery in us (and by perſwading us to neglect the holy Communion, get a great advantage of us) we ſhall be well enough diſpoſed to partake of it, with great fruit and profit, and no leſs comfort and joy in God: And that at any time, when an opportunity preſents it ſelf; though we have no notice, till it comes, of the opportunity. Suppoſe it be, when we go to ſee a ſick Friend or Neighbour, who is deſirous to receive the Communion; or when we come, upon occaſion, into a Church, where we did not know it would be at that time adminiſtred: I make no queſtion, it will be far more acceptable to our Lord Chriſt, if with no other preparation than I have now mentioned, we take the boldneſs to approach to his Table; than if, out of a miſtaken humility and caution, we turn our backs of it, and go away, becauſe we had not ſo much time,

as we deſired, to diſpoſe our ſelves for it.

For the Lord's ſake, let us root out thoſe falſe notions, whereby we are prejudiced againſt our certain duty, and be at the pains to ſettle true Chriſtian Principles in our minds; with a ſtedfaſt purpoſe to *grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt:* and then we ſhall find no cauſe at any time to refuſe holy Communion with him; but rather be ſtirred up to embrace the occaſion, with ardent love and devotion. *Which, the more it burns in our hearts, the fewer ſcruples we ſhall have in our minds.* And thoſe few, if there be any, that remain, will ſoon be overcome; when we feel what miſchief they do us, by keeping us from the moſt advantageous means of being eternally happy: Nay, from that preſent happineſs, which the ſweet taſtes of His love, and of the benefits He hath purchaſed by his Death and Paſſion, impart unto thoſe Souls, which devoutly partake of the holy Myſteries of Salvation. Which were ordained by our Lord, ſaith *Theodoret* (upon

Hebr.

Hebr. viii. 4.) for this very end; *that beholding the type of them, we may call to mind the ſufferings themſelves he indured for us; and may thereby have our love inflamed towards our Benefactor; and expect the enjoyment of the good things, which are to come hereafter.*

Conclu-

Concluſion.

THUS, I hope, I have cleared the way to the Table of the Lord, ſo that there is no obſtacle left in it, to hinder your chearful approach unto it; if you have any will to partake of it. And the conſideration, of what I have repreſented in my *Firſt* Diſcourſe, hath, I truſt, formed ſuch a will in you: as the *ſecond* cannot but diſpoſe all thoſe who ſeriouſly weigh it, to have a will to do it frequently.

Unto which I ſhall preſs you by theſe *two* Arguments, and ſo conclude.

I. The firſt is the great concern we have made ſhow of about our Religion, and the fears we have pretended, leſt we ſhould be ſo unhappy as to loſe it. If we be in good earneſt concerned for it, why then, I beſeech you, do we not take care to keep it, by being truly Religious? Is there any reaſon to think, that they are troubled with fears of loſing one half of the Communion, who can

can be content with none at all? Or with what Conſcience do they find fault with the Church of *Rome* for taking away the Cup from the People; when they themſelves live as if the whole Sacrament were unneceſſary?

It is a falſe zeal, which declaims againſt the Prieſts receiving alone; and doth not bring men to receive with him, when they may: but ſuffers him ſtill to remain at the Altar, with a very ſmall Company.

In theſe things we accuſe and reproach our ſelves; demonſtrating we are not led by Religion, but by humour, Worldly Intereſt or Faction. For no man can be thought to be truly ſolicitous for the preſervation of Religion; when he makes no uſe of it, nor receives any benefit by it. Cannot he live without the name, who lives without the thing?

If we be unfeignedly deſirous to maintain the eſtate of Religion here eſtabliſhed; let us ſeriouſly comply with its Inſtitutions: and ſerve God duly in all its Offices: being afraid of this above all other things, leſt God ſhould therefore remove our Candleſtick out of its place,

becauſe we will not walk in the light thereof; therefore deprive us of the opportunities of the Holy Communion, becauſe we have no liſt to Communicate.

Unto which duty let us ſtir up our ſelves, that it may ſtir us up to all other. For what other way do we know like this; nay, what other way but this, for our preſervation?

II. That's the *ſecond* thing; We of the Church of *England* profeſs to depend wholly upon Heaven, in the uſe of ſpiritual Weapons alone, for our protection in times of danger: diſclaiming the Lawfulneſs of taking up Arms to reſiſt the Supreme Power, upon the account of Religion. Are we not ſtrangely forgetful then, if we accuſtom not our ſelves to the uſe of theſe ſpiritual means, for our ſafety and ſecurity: eſpecially this, of which I may ſay, as *David* of the Sword of *Goliah*, *there is none like it?*

What account can we give of ſuch foul neglect of him, unto whom we ſay every day, *there is none that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God?* Is not this to expoſe our

our ſelves to be a prey unto our Enemies, if ever they have as much power, as will to devour us? For we openly declare, by not ſeeking aid continually from above, in that way wherein we are moſt likely to obtain it, that we depend upon nothing at all; but are the moſt defenceleſs of all Mankind.

So they would have thought, in ancient days; when they look'd upon thoſe, *as left unarmed and naked, who were not fortified with the protection of the body and bloud of Chriſt.* Which are the words of S. *Cyprian*, who argues thus (in his 57. Epiſtle) *ſince the Euchariſt is made on purpoſe, that it may be a defence and ſafeguard, unto thoſe who receive it; let us arm thoſe whom we would have to be ſafe againſt the Adverſary* (ſpeaking of the fight of affliction they were to encounter) *with the munition of the Lord's plenteous fullneſs. For how can we teach, or provoke them to ſhed their bloud for the Confeſſion of his Name; if entring the Combate, we deny them the bloud of Chriſt? Or how ſhall we make them fit for the Cup of Martyrdom, if we admit them not firſt to drink in the Church, the Cup of the Lord?*

Conſider,

Conſider, I beſeech you, how we in this Church profeſs *to lean only upon the hope of his heavenly grace:* which is ſo neceſſary for us, that we acknowledge in another Collect, that *the Church cannot continue in ſafety without his ſuccour*; and therefore pray him, to *preſerve it by his help and goodneſs.* Shall we not then ſeek this ſuccour moſt ſolicitouſly? ſhall we not implore this Heavenly Grace, with ardent cries; eſpecially in this powerful way of prevailing with him, by repreſenting to him, what Chriſt hath done and ſuffered for his Church, which he purchaſed with his own moſt precious bloud? We abandon all care of our ſelves, when we thus forſake the only help we have to reſt upon. Nay, it is to contradict our Prayers; when we ſay we have no other Hope, and yet do not flee to him, *our refuge and ſtrength, a very preſent help in trouble.* It is, at leaſt, a vain and ſenſleſs leaning on him, which makes us neglect him; and lay aſide the principal ſupport which he hath left us, for our incouragement and comfort in all our diſtreſſes.

If we really depend on him alone; we had need apply our ſelves unto him, with

with warmth of affection, and great diligence. *If we rely on his help and goodneſs,* let us take care to pleaſe him in all things: that ſo we may obtain the favour, either to have the evils turned away from us which we have deſerved; or to be fortified againſt them with ſuch a pious conſtancy, that they may be ſtedfaſtly indured.

If we do not thus ſtudy to approve our ſelves his faithful Servants, we fooliſhly confide in him; againſt his own expreſs Declarations, that he will not patronize us in Irreligion, and contempt of his Authority.

But if we faithfully obey him; then *we ſurely truſting in his Defence, need not fear the power of any Adverſaries:* but reſt aſſured, that *he will keep his Church and Houſhold continually in his true Religion, that they who do lean only upon the hope of his heavenly grace, may evermore be defended by his mighty power, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

FINIS.

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